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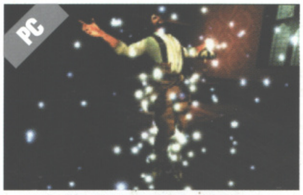

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THE BOUNCER
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ISSUE 233

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METAL GEAR 2

FACT: THE FIRST REAL PLAYTEST OF PS2'S BLOCKBUSTER, WITH 30 NEW PICS TO PROVE IT

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- *ZOE*
- *Sonic Adventure 2*

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- *ZOE*
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- *ISS Evol on PS2*
- *ZOE*

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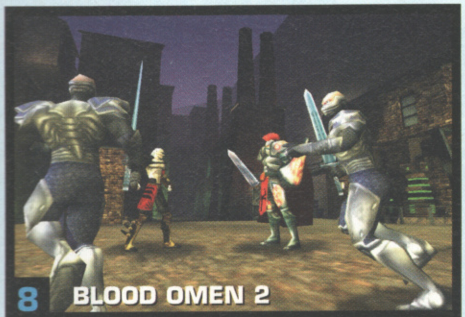
UP THE FRONT

YOUR INSIDE LINE ON EVERYTHING NEW IN GAMES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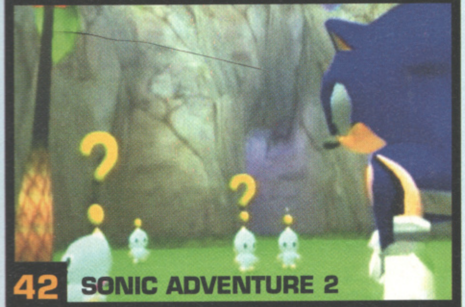
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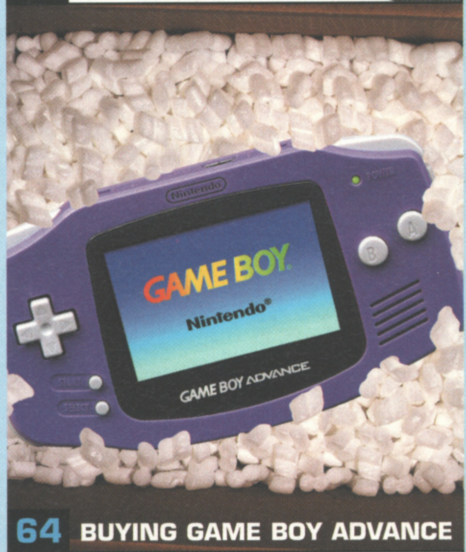

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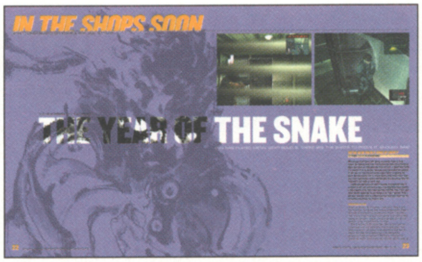
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Everything you need to know about Nintendo's hot handheld, launched in Japan this month

SOMETHING FOR NOTHING

COVER GIFT
Only CVG can give you so many blinding guides for so many formats. This ish: *Fear Effect 2*; *Pokémon Puzzle League*; *Phantasy Star Online* and *ISS Pro Evolution 2*. Phew!

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Five copies up for grabs

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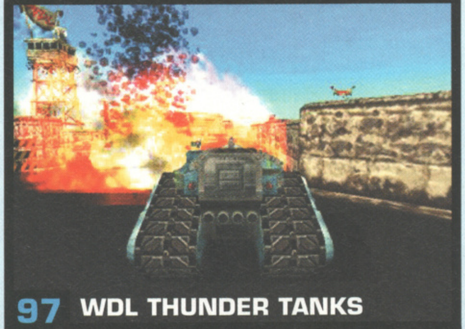

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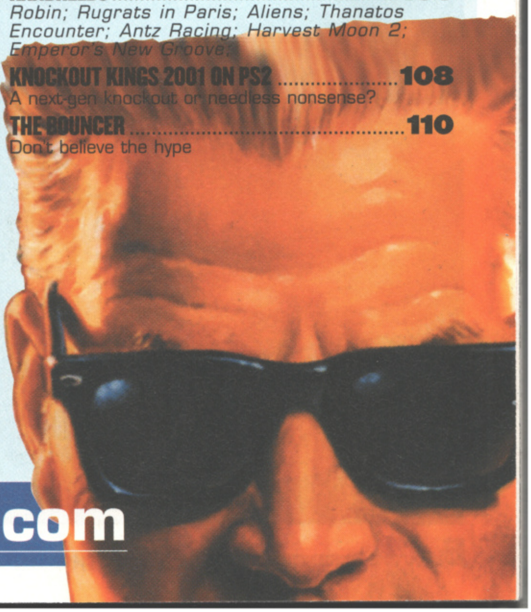

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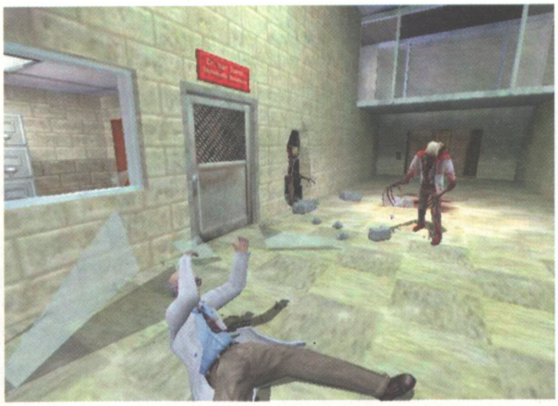
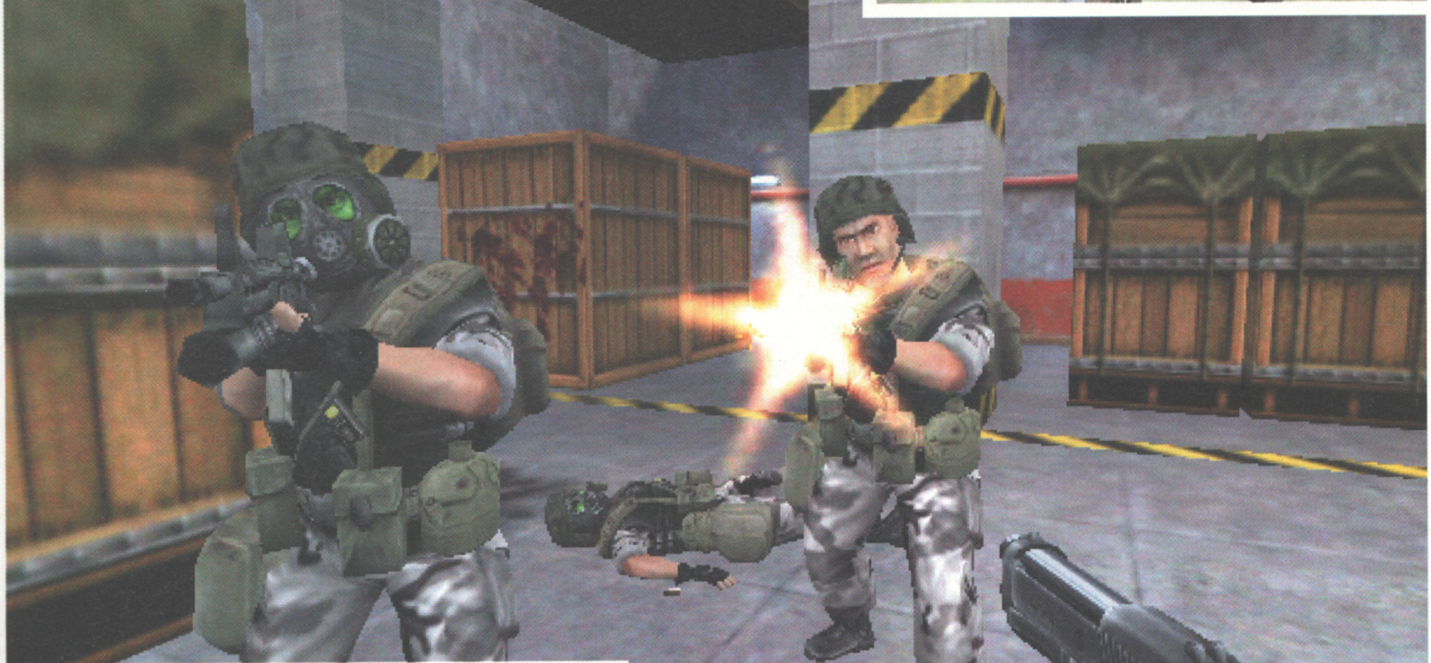
HALF-LIFE

OUT **TBC** PLATFORM **PS2**

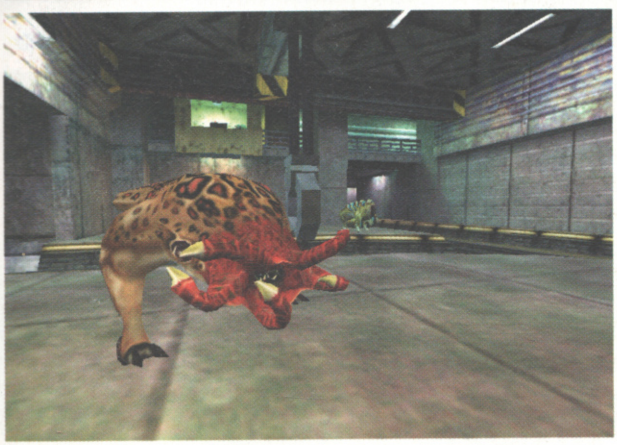
One of the PC's finest first-person shooters finally emerges on the PS2, almost three years after the original. These early shots look just like a slightly higher res version of the PC game, although we're hoping – like the Dreamcast version – that there are some extras thrown in there to keep it fresh. And unlike *Quake 3* on the PS2, we're hoping they keep in a mouse control system. *Half-Life* is more story-led than the likes of *Quake* and *UT* and manages to keep you on the edge of your seat all the way through.



Game engine powered cut-scenes develop the plot as scientists fall prey to the alien invasion



He's outgunned and hopelessly outmanned. Those poor marines don't stand a chance against this untrained scientist Gordon Freeman



Just one of the charming aliens who have taken over the science laboratory

Cheers then, you just run off and leave me to clean up ya mess, why don't you

◀ A very scary moment. You hear this beast smashing the floor from miles away. While most sane people really *don't* want to find out what's making the noise, you go in and check out what's going on.

▲ Here come the marines, but have they come to save you or just dispose of evidence of the experiments?

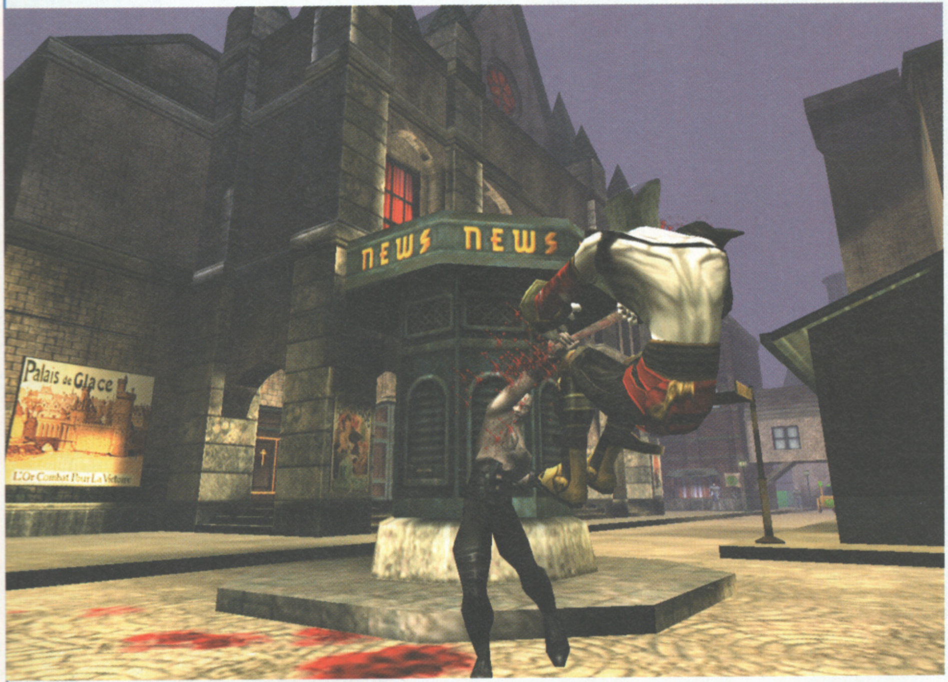
▼ Er, I guess there's no chance we could just talk this over then

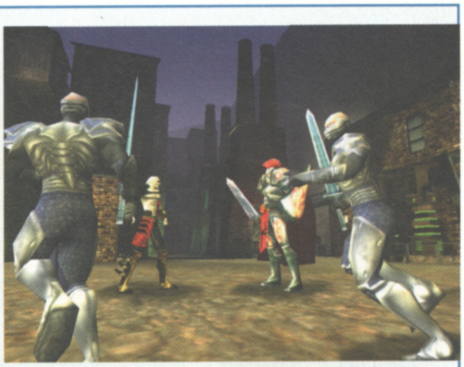
▶ Enemy troops wade in thick and fast, rattling off rounds like crazy. Although there's a cool storyline which runs through, *Half-Life* is a high-octane blast

LEGACY OF KAIN: BLOOD OMEN 2

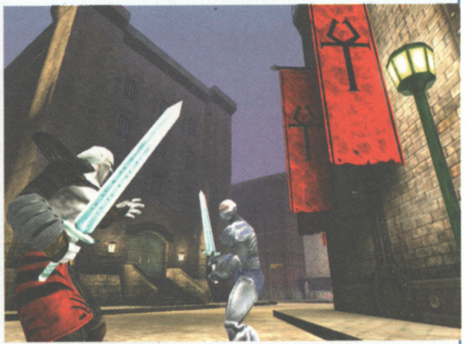
OUT **APRIL** PLATFORM **PS2**

Not a sequel to *Soul Reaver: Legacy of Kain*, but a sequel to the first *Blood Omen*. This episdoe focuses on vampire lord Kain, who must suck the life out of the poor saps in the nearby city. Hell, you can even punch them in the chest and rip out their hearts!

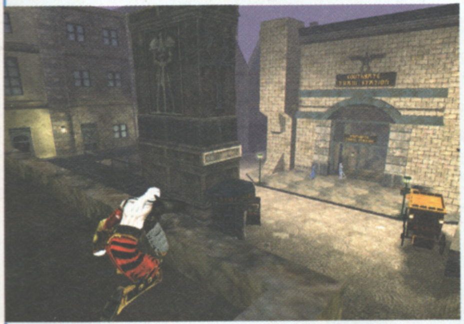




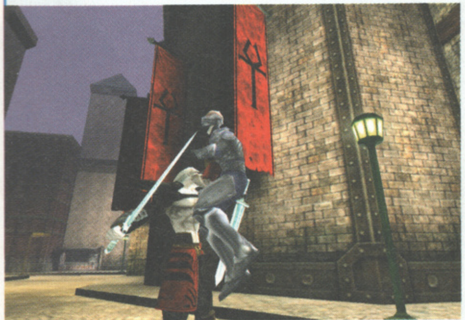
▲ The Biggest Sword contest turned nasty. Over 100 characters are in the game, most of which you get to slay



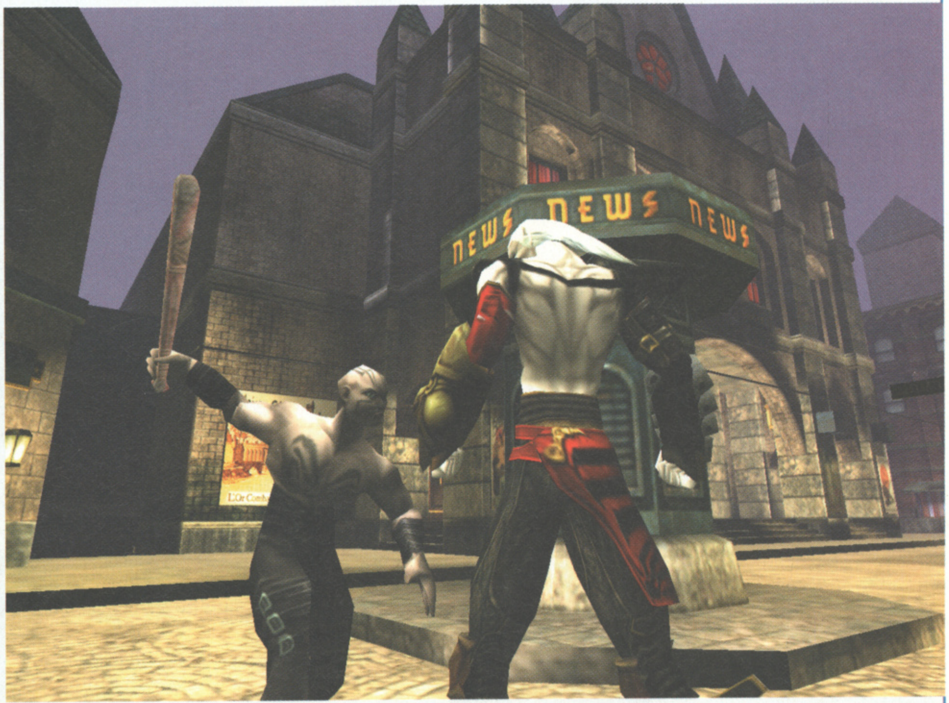
▲ Wonder if he'll fall for the old 'Look behind you' trick? Probably not, so get in quick with the sword



▲ Relying on the trains could be a big mistake if recent events are anything to go by



▲ Rip out this guy's heart. Dunno why, but do it anyway



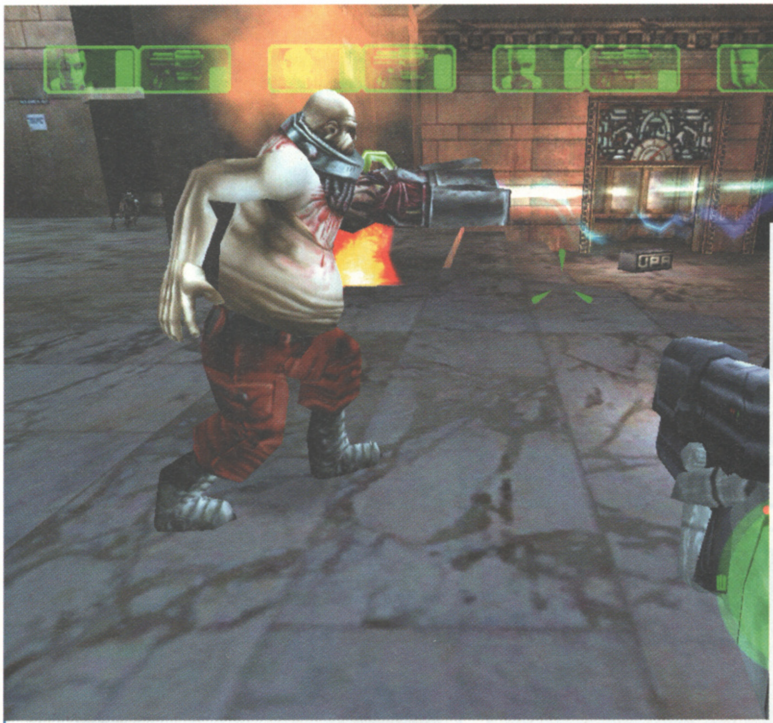
▲ When you go clubbing in *Blood Omen*, it's not quite your usual night out

PROJECT EDEN

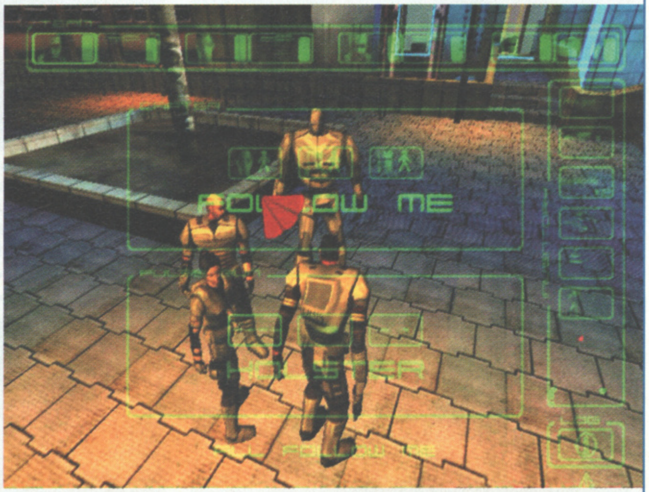
OUT **SUMMER 2001** *PLATFORM* **PS2 PC**

From the team that brought us *Tomb Raider* comes this new squad-based action adventure set in a 2000AD-style future city, where the rich keep building ever upwards.

◀ Something's gone wrong in the depths of the city. Guess who investigates?



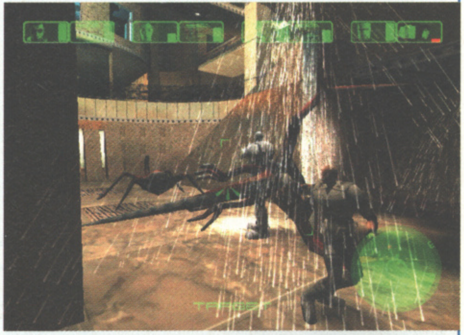
▼ Control of your four-strong team is pretty intuitive



▼ Each team member has special skills, some more action-oriented and others best suited for the puzzle sections

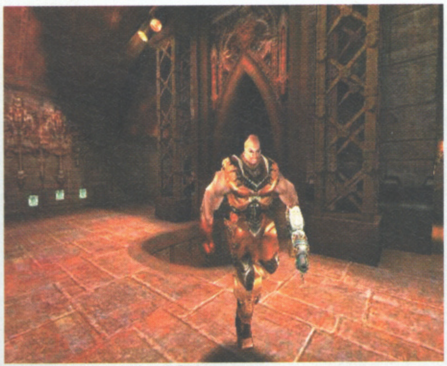
▼ Try to work out which of these screenshots is PS2 and which PC. Here's a clue – the PS2 lighting is only part-finished

▼ Core are working on some nice morphing effects. Piss someone off and you might see 'em morph into a monstrosity



◀ While it's clearly shaping up to be an action-based game, Core reckons it's worked up a strong storyline to hang it all on

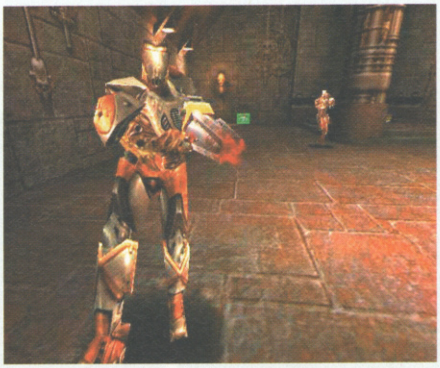
▶ Baddies come in all sizes so cool weapons are promised, including a 'Matrix' gun to make enemies act in slow-mo

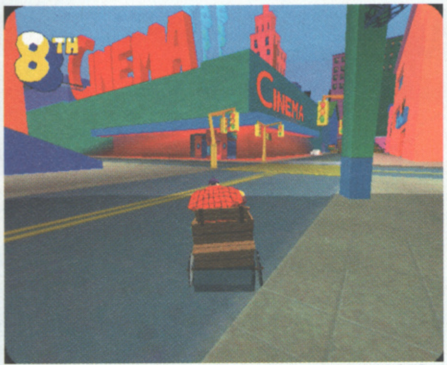


QUAKE 3: REVOLUTION

OUT **APRIL** PLATFORM **PS2**

As predictable as the colour of Les' clothes, *Quake 3* hits the PlayStation 2. Worryingly, there won't be any mouse support in the game, meaning you won't be able to use the best control system available for first-person shooters. But you will get multiplayer deathmatching that took the PC world by storm just over a year ago. Id is keeping a close eye on this one to make sure it lives up to its expectations, so we're promised plenty of mad, in-your-face gunplay.

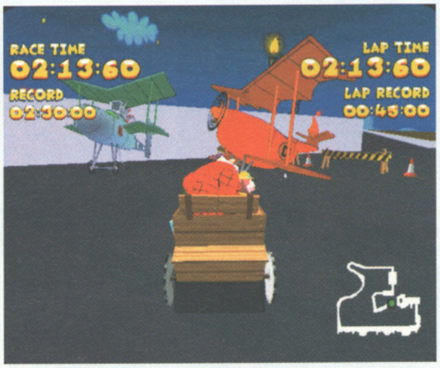




DASTARDLY & MUTTLEY AND THE WACKY RACES

OUT **JUNE** PLATFORM **PS2**

The long running cartoon series finally makes it to PS2. Join your favourite racers like Penelope Pitstop and the Ant Hill Mob as they race their, er, wacky vehicles through, er, wacky locations.

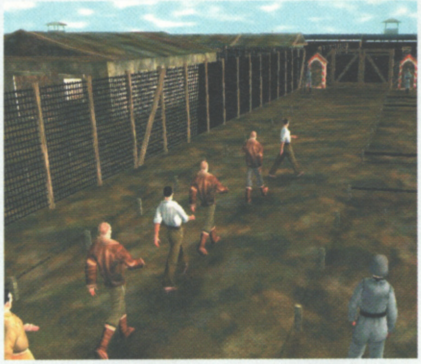


▲ All the vehicles come equipped with the weapons they use in the cartoons, promising plenty of mad-as-a-kipper *Mario Kart*-style racing action. The Hanna Barbera licence has hardly been pushing the boundaries of gaming so far – so maybe this will be the first game to prove its worth

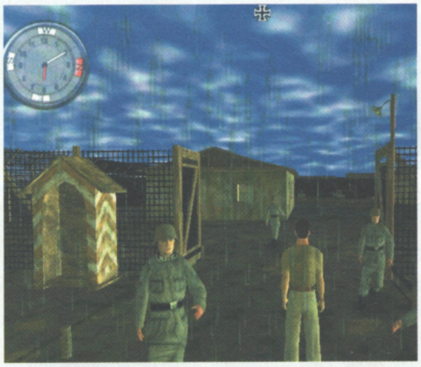
PRISONERS OF WAR

OUT **TBC** PLATFORM **PC**

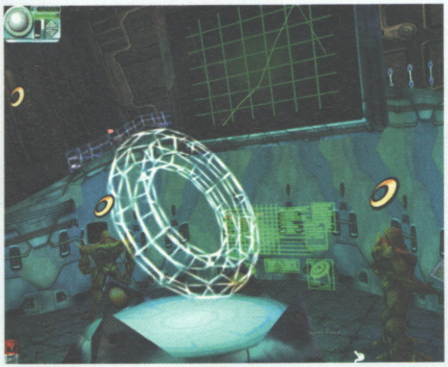
Remember the old Escape from Colditz board game? Well this is basically that, but in a game. The Germans have busted your ass and you've got to break out and get home.



▲ You'll have to interact with other characters to hatch the perfect escape plan, attending to all the details to make sure nothing goes wrong



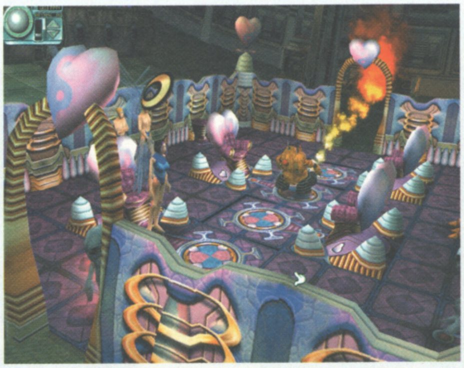
▲ And of course the Germans aren't going to just sit back and let you walk out the front gate (unless you're really good). They'll watch your every move



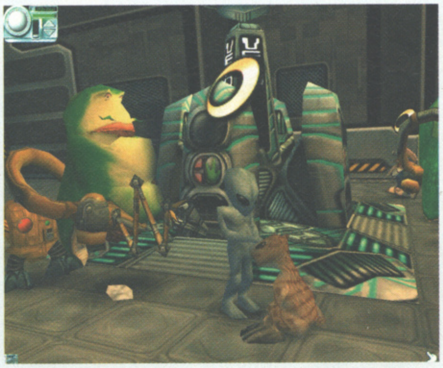
STARTOPIA

OUT **MAY** PLATFORM **PC**

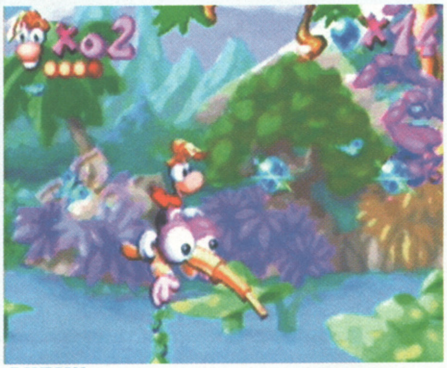
God-space-strategy-sim. That narrows it down a a bit, then. You get to build up and maintain a series of space stations containing various alien races – who don't always get on.

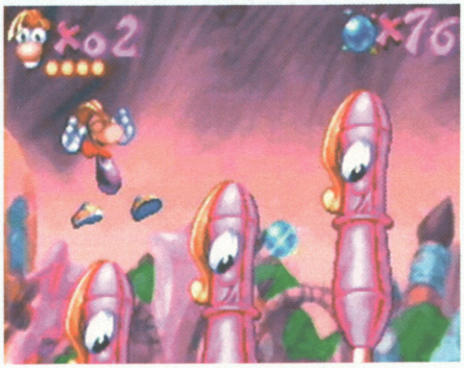


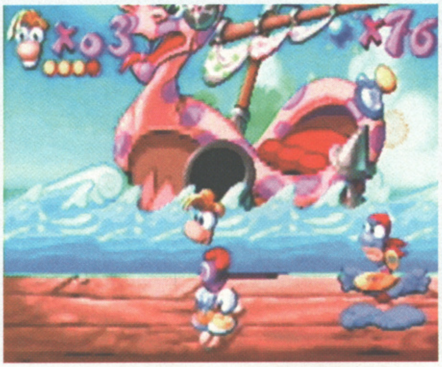
▲ As well as building and keeping the aliens from ripping each other apart, you also face certain misisons you *have* to carry out. All done with its tongue very firmly in its cheek. Cute graphics and fun action could make an irresistible combination. Coming along nicely since we last saw it



▲ Down boy. You have to take over sections of stations by creating space-based Utopias for all the creatures you can attract. The more you get, the more space you get to operate in. Bit like *Theme Hospital*. The guys that made that game are also behind this one. Hmm, a coincidence, surely







RAYMAN

OUT**TBC** PLATFORM**GAME BOY ADVANCE**

Rayman is coming to GBA and he looks just as lovely as ever. Based on the massive-selling original side-scrolling PS and Saturn adventure, it looks like it'll be platforming at its finest.

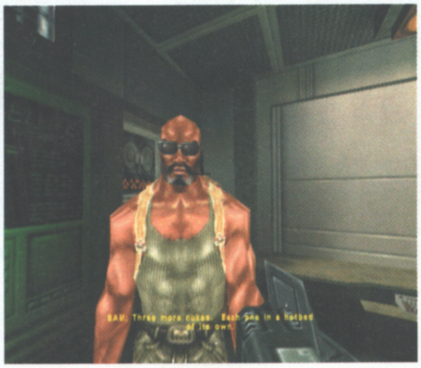
▲ You can tell from these first screens that *Rayman* on GBA will be the tastiest thing you're likely to see for a long while. Help the limbless one rescue his buddies from the evil Mr Dark by collecting lums, swinging across chasms, shooting powerballs from your fist. Yes!

▲ The visuals have been enhanced for GBA and there's even a wicked-sounding Capture The Flag style mode for two-players over a link cable. Over nine million *Rayman* games have flown off the shelves so far and this one looks set to bump that figure up even further. Bring on the proboscis!

SOLDIER OF FORTUNE

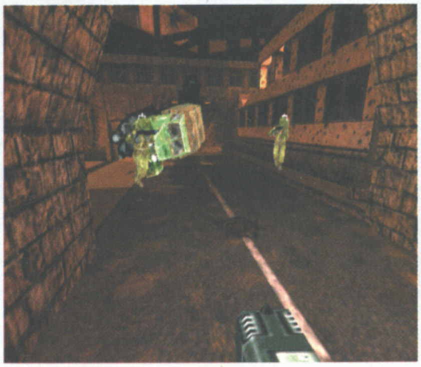
OUT**JUNE** PLATFORM**DC**

One of the most controversial games of all time finally leaks from PC to DC. *SoF* on PC was the nastiest, goriest first-person shooter ever. But was also widely acclaimed.

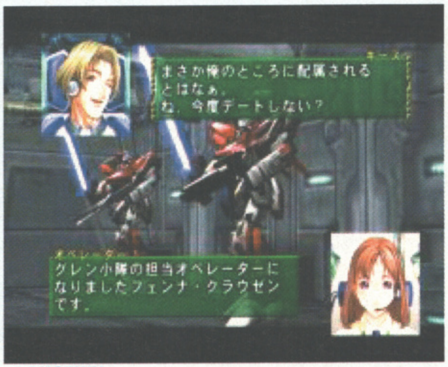


BAM: Three more nukes. Each one in a hotbed of its own.

▲ Saving the world from nukes, killing terrorists and wearing the latest in mercenary fashion is all in a day's work for you and your buddy Bam

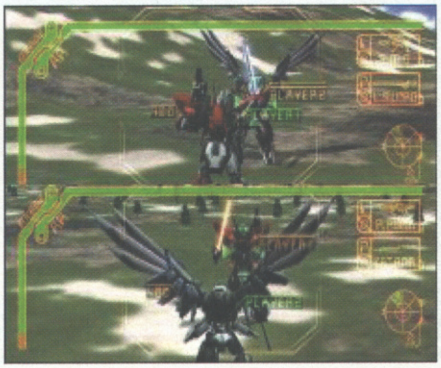


▲ Each character can be shot in 26 different parts of the body - laugh maniacally as you shoot them in the crotch or wince as you take their legs off



まさか俺のところに配属されるとはなぁ。
ね、今度デートしない？

グレン小隊の担当オペレーターになりましたフェンナ・クラウゼンです。

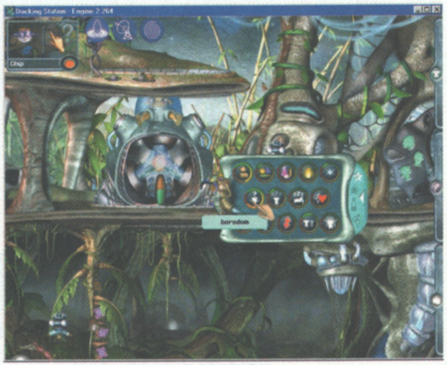


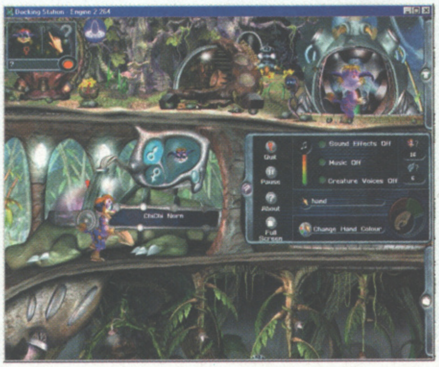
J-PHOENIX

OUT**SPRING** PLATFORM**PS2**

The PS2 has been inundated with Mech games since launch, and the trend looks set to continue with this latest rustbucket battler from Japan. Well, at least they're not all racing games.

▲ In *J-Phoenix* you take to the battlefield as usual, only this time any bits you blast off your unsuspecting opponent can be picked up and taken back to your lab (*Metal Fatigue*, anyone?). Give it a lick of paint, learn how it works and you can glue it into your own Mech to use in the next battle





CREATURES DOCKING STATION

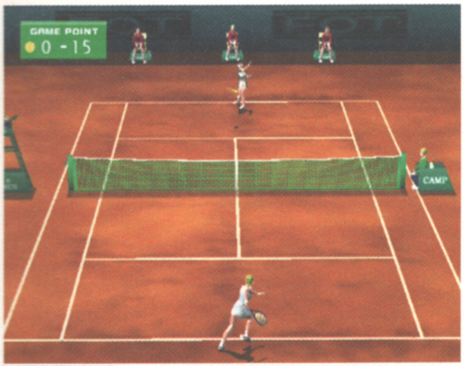
OUT**APRIL** PLATFORM**PC**

If you own *Creatures 3*, this *Docking Station* will enhance it, providing new levels and creatures to play with. But even if you don't own that then you can still download this for free and play.

▲ You have to train a bunch of creatures with evolving intelligence to carry out tasks throughout the levels, turning them into your bestest little buddies in the process. It's interesting for kids, fascinating for adults. And best of all, it's free – download it from www.creatures.net/dockingstation

ACCESS ALL GAMES

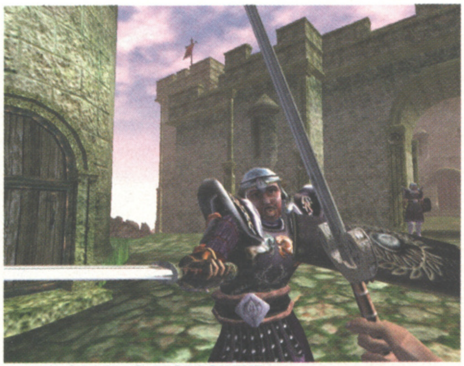
A WHOLE MONTH'S NEW GAMES IN ONE PLACE



WTA TENNIS

OUT **MAY** PLATFORM **PLAYSTATION 2**

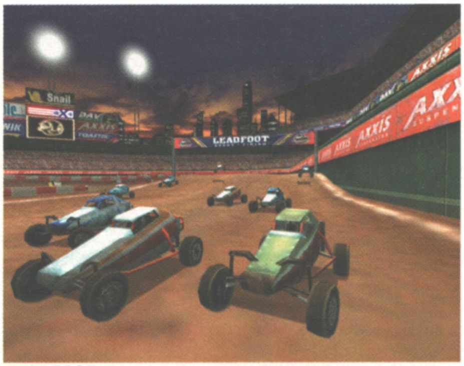
Konami has splashed out to get the official girlie tennis licence – don't see why they didn't just snap up the rights to do a PS2 version of Sega's *Virtua Tennis*. That's the only tennis game real gamers wanna see on PS2, even if this does have the likes of Kournikova in it.



ELDER SCROLLS: MORROWIND

OUT **TBC** PLATFORM **PC**

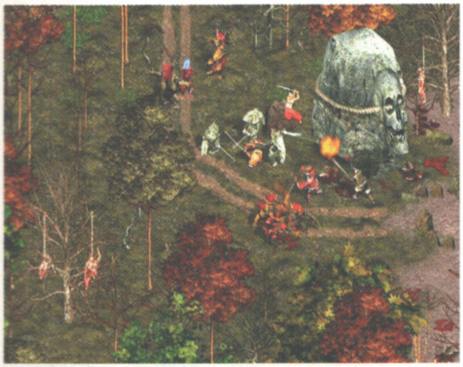
Following on from *Daggerfall*, *Morrowind* is the latest in the hardcore RPG *Elder Scrolls* series to emerge from US developers Bethesda. The story and locations will be as huge as ever, with the first-person action bringing a more approachable look to the game. Hope it's better than Origin's first-person effort, *Ultima Ascension*.



LEADFOOT

OUT **SUMMER** PLATFORM **PC**

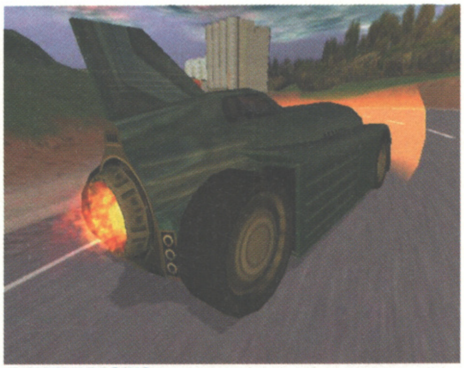
Racing games need a kick in the butt. Take 2 is hoping off-road stadium racer *Leadfoot* will do the trick, claiming amazing vehicle control, 180 events etc, etc. Aussie developer Ratbag's behind the title. Its PC *Dirt Track Racing* games did okay Down Under, but hardly broke any records here.



THRONE OF DARKNESS

OUT **AUGUST** PLATFORM **PC**

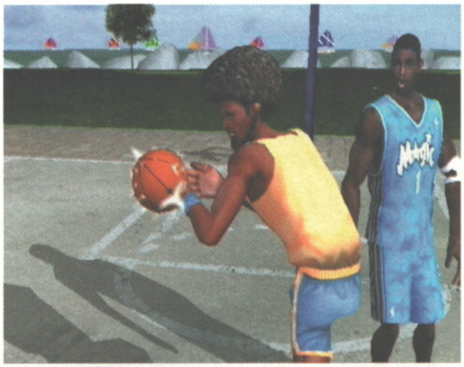
Action role-player with multi-character and real-time tactical control. Expect both a strong one-player campaign with multiple sub-quests and up to 35-way multiplay. Four clans, each with seven character classes, must challenge the Dark Lord and his countless minions. 20 monster types, based on Japanese myth.



RUMBLE RACING

OUT **MAY** PLATFORM **PLAYSTATION 2**

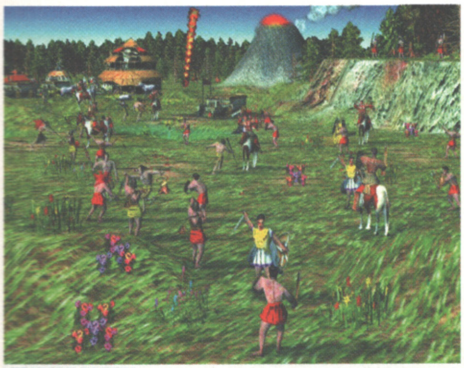
Rushing to fill the huge vaccum of racing games on PS2, this promises 'extreme arcade racing', packed with power-ups, tricks, unlockable worlds, 20 cars and varied terrain. We've had a blast and it's certainly fast, but we're now in therapy recovering from the Country and Western choons.



NBA STREET

OUT **JUNE** PLATFORM **PC**

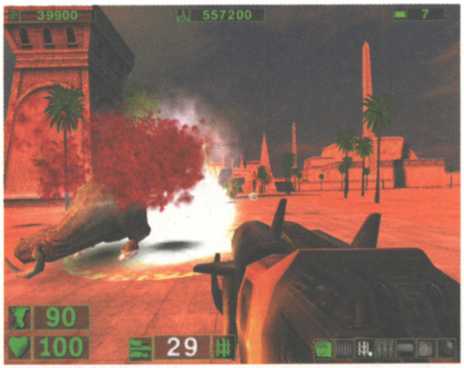
NBA Live 2001 hasn't gathered any dust on the shop shelves and already EA's boasting another *NBA* title. But wait. Before you bitch about sports games being saturated with updates and slight variations, *Street* features three-on-three, hip-hop choons, arcadey end-of-level bosses and Michael Jordan. Interesting



EMPIRE EARTH

OUT **SEPTEMBER** PLATFORM **PC**

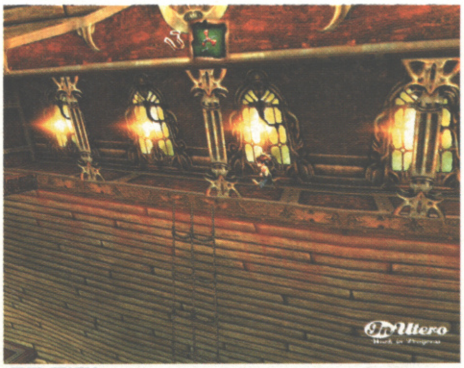
Your chance to re-write 500,000 years of human history. 3D real-time strategy fest from part of the team that brought us *Age of Empires*, so that sounds promising. Build and develop settlements into thriving cities, command armies and heroes from across the centuries, even control the weather



SERIOUS SAM

OUT **SUMMER** PLATFORM **PC**

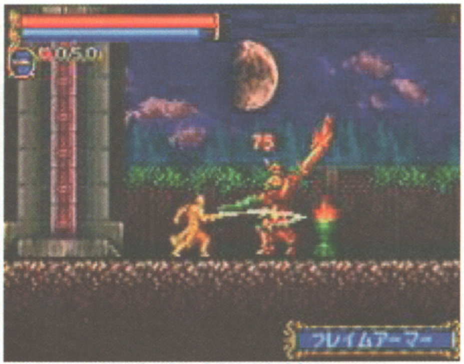
The backlash against multiplayer-based first-person shooters like *Q3* continues, with Take 2 promising a full-on, non-linear one-player action-fest. Hardman hero Sam 'Serious' Stone travels back in time to wipe out an alien exterminator called, um, Mental. There'll be multiplay too.



EVIL TWIN

OUT **APRIL** PLATFORM **DC**

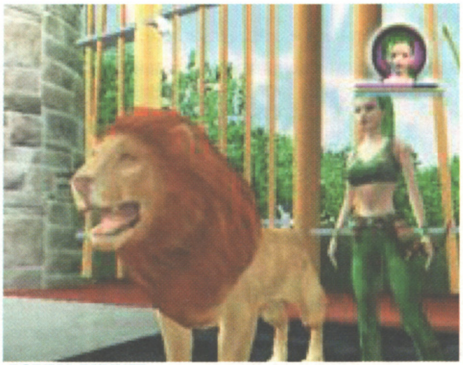
Disturbing adult-oriented adventure with platform gameplay. First shots appeared a year ago and since then In Utero has nailed *Evil Twin* down to 66 levels across eight islands. Main character Cyprien can transform into Super Cyprien, complete with mask and superpowers. A PC version is out now.



CASTLEVANIA: CIRCLE OF THE MOON

OUT**TBC** PLATFORM**GAME BOY ADVANCE**

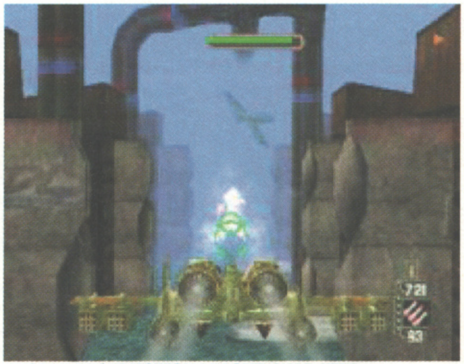
One of the finest series of platform-action games ever hits the GBA with *Castlevania* from Konami. Run around, collect items and slaughter masses of the undead as they rise with whips and blades. One of the bigger GBA titles currently in the pipeline. Hopefully will be better than *Legacy of Darkness* on N64



PORTAL RUNNER

OUT**TBC** PLATFORM**PS2**

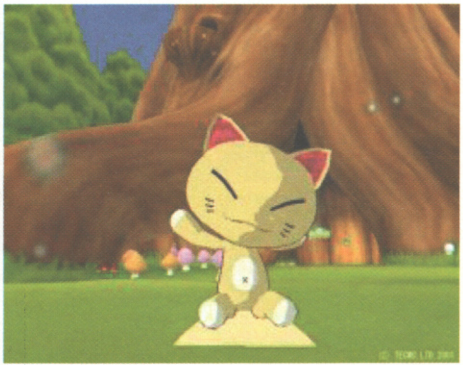
You play as Vikki Grimm, who has been trapped by her arch-enemy and sent off to another dimension, where together with her pet lion she must battle her way back to reality. Although it's early days, so far *Portal Runner* looks sweet, with sharp graphics and gameplay that promises to be smooth as silk. More news soon.



WORLD DESTRUCTION LEAGUE: WARJETZ

OUT**TBC** PLATFORM**PS2**

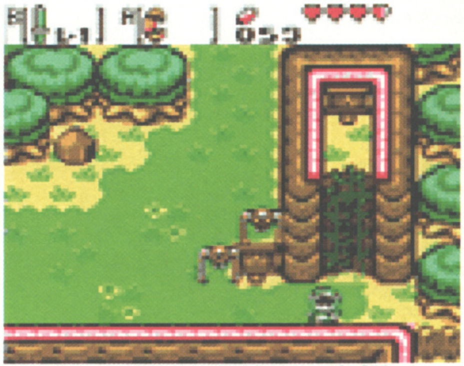
With their better than average *Thunder Tanks* (a kind of *Twisted Metal* meets *Return Fire* hybrid) already under their belts, the *World Destruction League* now turn to the skies for their latest outing. Fly jetsand bag other aircraft in a hi-tech wargame set in the future.



MONSTER FARM

OUT**TBC** PLATFORM**PS2**

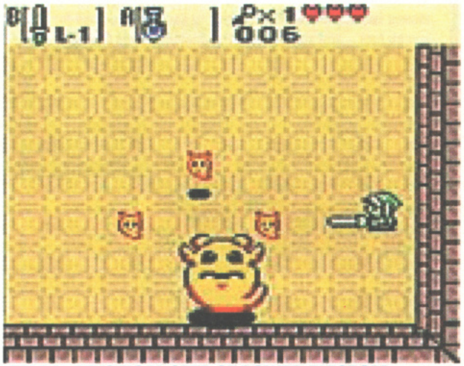
Another PSone game makes the next-gen leap onto PS2. Raise little creatures and then send them off to fight each other. Sound at all like a certain other gaming series? Tecmo have sold millions of the PSone version in Japan, although it was never that big in the UK - maybe this one will reverse that trend



ZELDA: MYSTICAL SEED OF POWER/WISDOM

OUT**TBC** PLATFORM**GAME BOY COLOR**

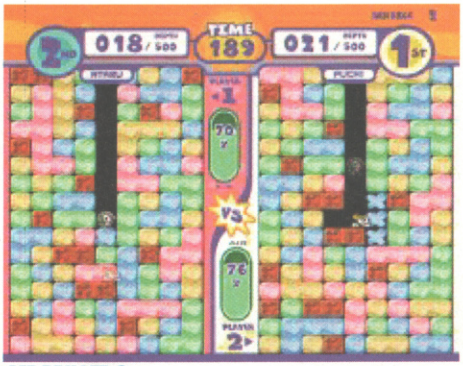
Hot on the heels of the dual success of the latest *Pokémon* outing, The *Legend of Zelda* has been split into two games. Both are separate adventures in their own rights with plenty of traditional *Zelda* role-playing and adventuring elements, plus the usual hidden surprises. Known as *Oracle of Ages /Seasons* in the US.



ZELDA: MYSTICAL SEED OF POWER/WISDOM

UT**TBC** PLATFORM**GAME BOY COLOR**

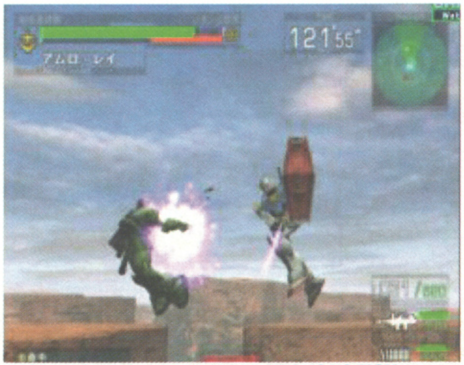
But true *Zelda* veterans won't be happy until they have completed both of these games, because then they will discover that they do in fact interact with each other *Pokémon*-style to unlock new features that completing just one of them won't reveal. We like that. Crafty marketing ploy too, but we can't get enough of Link.



MR DRILLER G

OUT**TBC** PLATFORM**ARCADE**

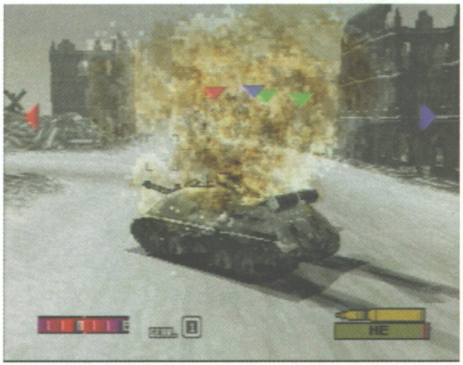
Cult gaming hero *Mr Driller* is back, this time in the arcades. Namco has listened to the criticism of the first game and stuck in a two-player mode to keep us happy, plus you have a choice of six characters to play as. Expect PlayStation 2 and Dreamcast versions to hit soon, too.



MOBILE SUIT GUNDAM: FEDERATIONS VS ZION

OUT**TBC** PLATFORM**DREAMCAST**

This is just about to hit Japanese arcades but Namco has already announced their intentions of bringing it to Dreamcast straight after. As you can see, there's plenty of full-on robot trashing action to be had. No doubt this will receive an extra boost from the cartoon series that's on Sky.



PANZER FRONT 2

OUT**MAY** PLATFORM**PLAYSTATION**

Tasty World War 2 tank combat. Re-enact your favourite scenes from Kelly's Heroes or The Longest Day as you blow the crap out of any tracked piles of rust you find. Epic battles complete with realistic WW2 locations should make for some tanking great explosive action.

SEGA DOWN BUT

DREAMCAST KICKS THE BUCKET, BUT SEGA FIGHTS ON

JANUARY 24TH

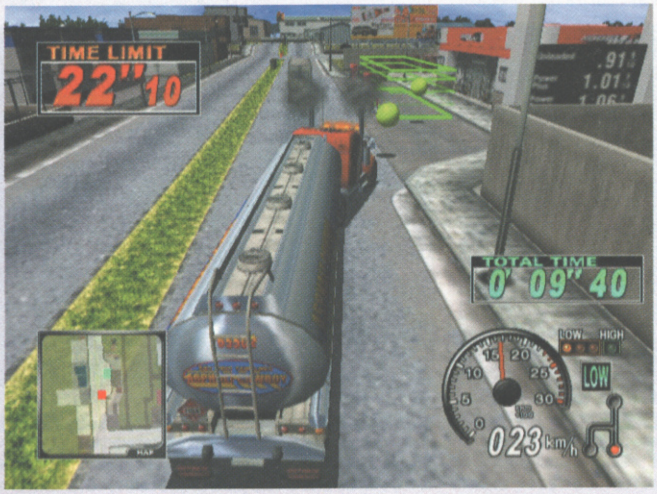
JANUARY 24TH 2001 – a date that will go down in gaming history. Just as you were wondering whether PS2 is all it's cracked up to be and maybe you should've got a Dreamcast after all, Sega announces that it's to stop making its console in March. For the first time in over ten years, there'll be no Sega machine in the console wars. But this doesn't mean that the likes of *Sonic* and all those big coin-op conversions are destined for the gaming graveyard. Sega has shaken up the competition by announcing that it's to develop its games for PlayStation 2, Game Boy Advance, GameCube and Xbox. Sega will be marketing the DC for the rest of this year, but you can bet that they'll be putting all their money (what's left of it) into making sure their games for PS2 and GBA will be smash hits – and should save the company from financial ruin.

DREAM ON

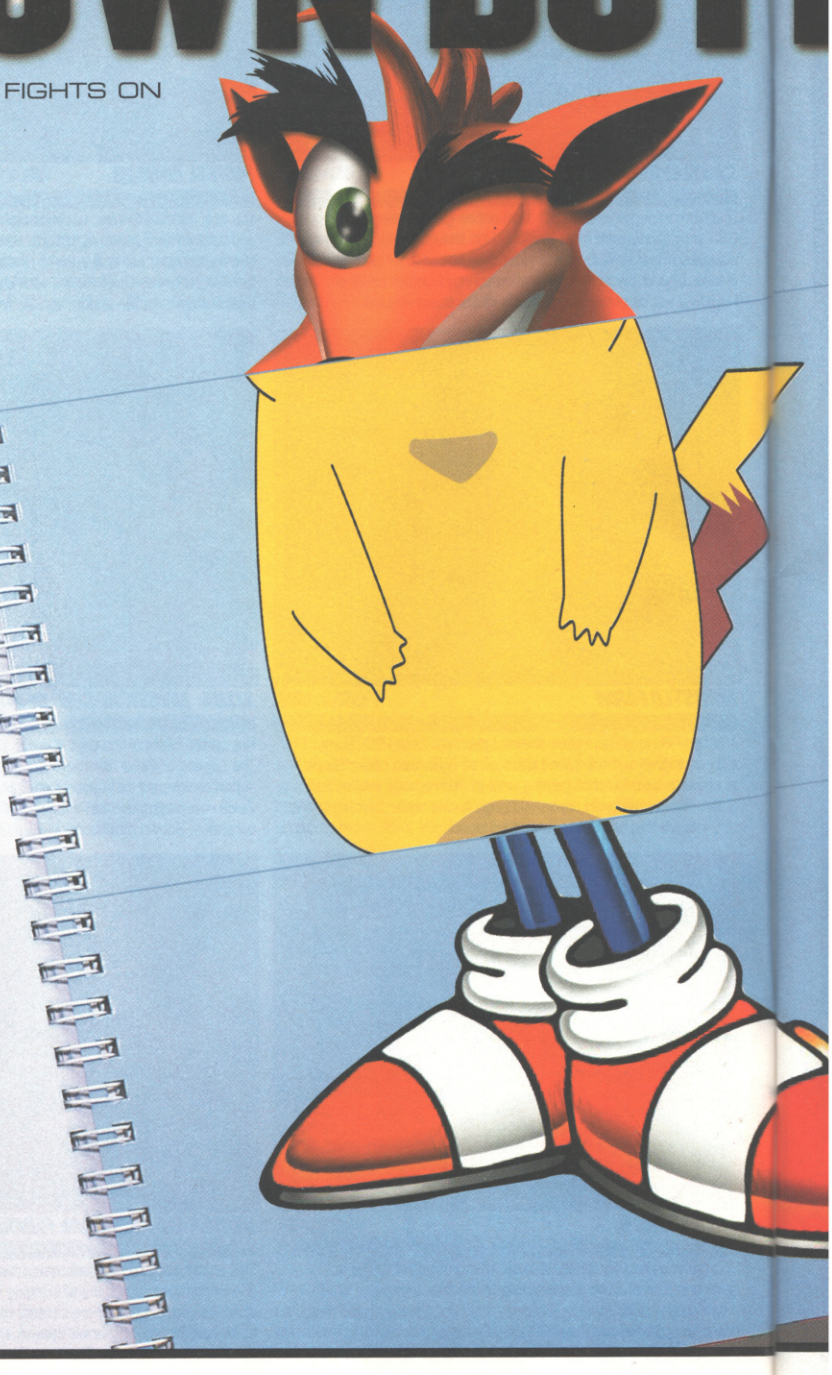
Though production of the DC has stopped, Sega has a stockpile of 1,500,000 machines worldwide that will be flying into the shops. The best news is that Sega has announced a price cut to a mere £100 – nice idea, but surely it's too little too late. It should have happened before Christmas. Game prices will fall through the floor too. Some shops like HMV are already selling select titles for £5, so this could be the year to stock up on some all-time classics. When asked about the DC's future, HMV told us "This sub £100 price-point now makes Dreamcast a truly essential purchase for gamers of any level. With classic 128-Bit titles such as *Virtua Tennis*, *Shenmue* and *MSR* available and some great price-driven software promotions (including a '2 For £30' deal on games such as *Code: Veronica* and *Sega GT*), you really can't go wrong."

CAST TO THE LIONS

Sega won't be abandoning the DC completely though. It has 100 games in the pipeline for this year and beyond, though third-party publishers will be winding down their commitment to the console over the coming months, as it will make more sense for them to focus on PS2. Big titles in the works include *Sonic Adventure 2*, *Shenmue 2*, *18 Wheeler*, *Head Hunter* and *Crazy Taxi 2*. The problem here is that shops will stock fewer and fewer Dreamcast games, preferring to give the shelf space to PS2 and PC. So fewer games will be sold, meaning fewer will be produced. A bit of a vicious circle, really.



***18 Wheeler* will be one of the first Sega-developed DC titles to get the PS2 makeover**



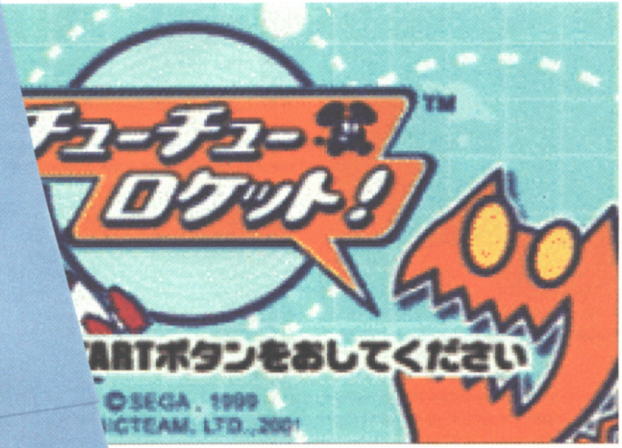
WORDS**LES ELLIS** SCREENSHOTS**VARIOUS**

NOT OUT

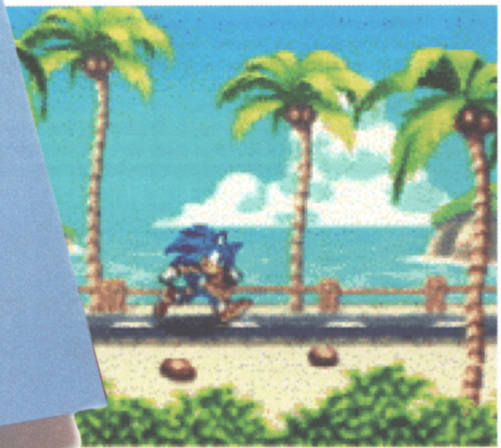
PS2
Dreamcast
SEGA

THE DREAM TEAM

Before the big announcement, Sega had already tested the waters by allowing Acclaim to start bringing several Sega-developed DC games to PS2, with *18 Wheeler*, *Crazy Taxi* and *Zombie Revenge* first on the list. This way it was able to get an idea how the rest of the games industry felt about DC-only titles being converted to other formats. It seems the industry gave the move the thumbs up and Sega's mind was made up. So far, Sega has confirmed older classics such as *Space Channel Five* as well as newer titles including *Virtua Fighter 4* will hit PS2, as well as *Sonic Advance* on Game Boy Advance. This shift should see all the big Sega names landing on the new machines, with talk of *Shenmue 3* heading for Xbox being the latest rumour.



***Chu Chu Rocket*, Sega's first online title is set to hit Game Boy Advance as a four-player link-up cable extravaganza. Should be a blast**



Check out how Sega's crazy speeding hog looks on the Game Boy Advance. A treat for handheld lovers everywhere

SEGA ON TV

Sega is looking outside of the world of consoles to make back some of the hundreds of millions of dollars it's pumped into the Dreamcast. It's done deals to bring online and offline Sega games to your TV via a new set-top box in collaboration with Pace, a company that makes cable and satellite set-top boxes for companies such as On-Digital. It'll be like your existing cable or digital TV box, but as well as supplying you with reams of TV channels, it will have a Dreamcast chipset enabling it to play some awesome games. Remember how Sony said PS2 was going to be the focus of your living room entertainment with its DVD capability? Well, maybe Sega's new move could really make that boast a reality. But it's not just your TV Sega wants to dominate. It has also done deals to bring its games to those Palm PCs that annoying suits on trains use, plus later this year new Motorola phones will be compatible with online Sega games. Sega dead? Not at all.

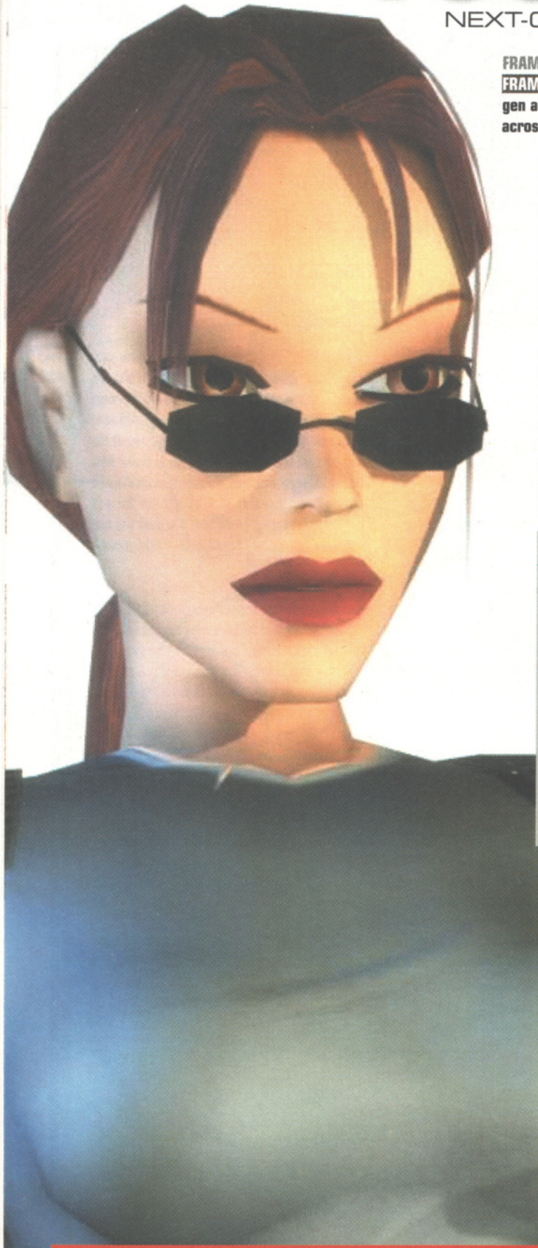
CVG RECKONS

It may seem like a huge blow to lose an old timer like Sega from the hardware market, and though it ain't exactly good news, there is a seriously bright side to the whole thing. Think about it: until now, the only way anyone could enjoy Sega's game design genius was on Dreamcast. Soon you'll be able to enjoy its magic touch on pretty much whatever console you own, as well as on handhelds, set-top TV boxes and mobile phones. So what if it turns out Sega isn't as good as Sony at making and marketing consoles? It's still one of the best game designers you'll ever see.

YOU'VE BEEN FRAMED

NEXT-GEN LARA PLOT DETAILS REVEALED!

WORDS: **PETER WALKER** IMAGES: **CORE**



FRAMED FOR

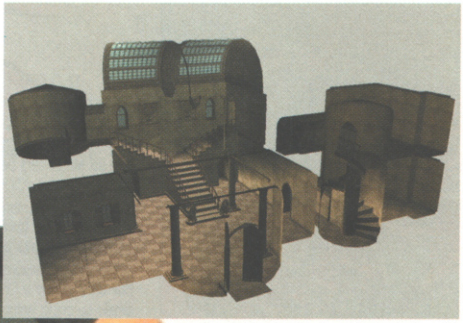
FRAMED FOR a murder she didn't commit, Lara's first explosive next-gen adventure will see gaming's most famous action babe travelling all across Europe to clear her name. From Paris to historic Prague, from a castle set in the forests of Germany to the weird and claustrophobic troglodyte cities of Capadoccia, Ms Croft will find herself knee-deep in intrigue, art-theft, riot police, puzzles, ancient mysteries and, of course, guns.

CLIMAX

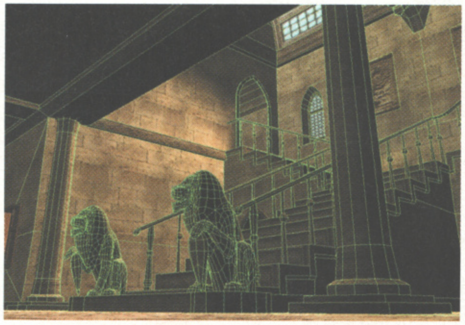
Revealing part of the darker, more adult storyline to CVG, Core confirmed it has been working on the plots for the next six Lara adventures, and, while claiming they are not 'episodic', the long-term stories will develop in more of an X-Files style. Each game will reach a proper climax but, like Scully and Mulder's adventures, at least one major sub-plot will be running in the background throughout her next-gen romps.

MYSTERIOUS

This will involve the mysterious biblical race of the Nephilim, who are some sort of descendants of Fallen Angels (check your religious texts for the 'real' skinny), but players will be left guessing as to just what they're scheming across the six adventures. Then there's the centuries-old Eckhart, a menacing figure locked up in a castle until accidentally set free by blundering Allied bombers in the Second World War.



Remember how *Quake 1* maps looked using the 'no clipping' cheat..?



They've been wire-framed. Even the railings are modelled in 3D

HEAVY METAL

In a new twist for Lara games, players will get to switch control to heavy metal T-shirt-toting tough guy Kurtis, who'll be going head-to-head with Eckhart in a bid to recapture him – or die trying. Throw in the Lara trademark search for artifacts, half-inching famous paintings containing hidden clues to an ancient secret, and a portal taking our gal to three different locations (including that old favourite dinosaur land in the original *Tomb Raider*) and you're beginning to get the picture.

SKILLS

PS2 Lara, with ten times more polygons than PSone Lara, is a dead cert and an Xbox version is unconfirmed as yet but highly probable. However, Core's efforts to improve Lara both graphically and as a more mature heroine go beyond just stronger storylines and dropping *Tomb Raider* from the titles of her next-gen romps.

DEJA VIEW

In a bid to enhance the gameplay further, Lara will now develop her skills according to what actions she performs in the game. So if players choose to make her climb a lot, then her climbing abilities will improve. There'll still be more obvious ways to complete objectives, but it means more hardcore Lara fans will be rewarded for attempting to complete levels in a different manner. We like.

OK, so it's fiendishly tough to come up with original storylines that haven't already been done to death by Hollywood. Next-gen Lara's Nephilim existing side-by-side with humans for centuries sounds not entirely unlike the vampire race in Interview with a Vampire, while good-girl Lara being forced to carry out wrong-doings is somewhat reminiscent of Point Break or Nick of Time. Even the 'ancient evil locked up in castle accidentally set free in WW2' plot smacks of the horror book-turned-movie The Keep.

GOODY TWO-SHOES

But, say Core, while Lara may be forced by the plot to carry out activities no wholesome heroine would normally be seen dead doing, there's no plans at present to turn her into a fully-fledged, evil, cop-killing badass, because that'd be totally out of keeping with her image. So, darker storylines and more depth of gameplay, but still a bit of a goody two-shoes. Bah-humbug, we say.

FOUR LARA STORYLINES YOU'LL NEVER SEE

1 Game name: *Lara – The Golden Years*
Certificate: PG
Plot: The first 99% is played out as an octogenarian, zimmer-frame wielding inaction-babe, featuring amazing new locations like The Residential Home Dinner Hall. Lara's special weapons include a refillable colostomy bag grenade and highly poisonous sweets to kill kids who throw stones at her bedroom window. In the last 1% of the game, Lara sells her soul to Satan for eternal youth and catches a train to Glasgow to live with the Chuckle Brothers.
Likelihood of Core approval: None. It's totally unbelievable – Lara'd never catch a train to Glasgow because all British trains are crap.

2 Game name: *Womb Raider*
Certificate: XXX
Plot: A game of two halves, starting with sex. Lots of it. And ultra hardcore. But ends as an interactive art flick packed with subliminal messaging about the meaning off life.
Likelihood of Core approval: Absolutely not. Pretentious arse. Beside, everyone knows sex and violence don't sell, right?

3 Game name: *Blinding Date*
Certificate: U
Plot: No plot as such, but Lara is a gameshow host in this innovative strategy game, where your ultimate goal is to prolong the lifespan of a tired old gameshow for two decades by only using the same three catchphrases and liberal abuse of hackneyed innuendo. Harvest big wads of cash and laugh all the way to the bank.
Likelihood of Core approval: Unlikely, though add in some haunted house survival horror sections and you could have a kind of real-time strategy *Devil Inside*. Now *that*'d be scary.

4 Game name: *Tomb Raider 6*
Certificate: As low as possible
Plot: Same as the past five Lara games.
Likelihood of Core Approval: Plan B if everyone hates all the changes in the first installment of next-gen Lara. Surely they'd never try this one...

僧官：召喚士とは……神秘のわざで
我らエボンの民をお守りくださるお方

ONE SMALL STEP FOR SONY...

ONLINE HEAVEN GETS ONE STEP CLOSER AS SONY HELPS KICK-START THE BROADBAND REVOLUTION

WORDS: **LEE SKITTRELL** PICTURES: **SQUARE**

REMEMBER ALL

REMEMBER ALL that talk from Sony about PlayStation 2 and the Digital Entertainment Network – super-fast multiplayer gaming, buying games, downloading music, videos and digital TV through your PS2? Then all seemed to go quiet for a couple of years. But fear not, Sony has finally announced it is now ready to kick-start the broadband gaming revolution, with a little help from former arch-rival Sega and arcade giant Namco.

Swap data in *Final Fantasy X* using PS2's internet hook-up? Yes!

ONLINE ARCADIA

The three companies are setting up a broadband games network in arcades across Japan. This will be the testing ground for similar networks around the world and, most exciting of all, for fast multiplayer gaming and entertainment through your PS2 at home. It's still not clear when home broadband will be rolled out, but when you think about *Soul Calibur 2* and *Final Fantasy XI* using this technology, it's got to be worth the wait.

BRIGHT FUTURE

The fibre-optic network will also allow high-speed transfer of every form of digital data imaginable. This includes movie and music files as well as game downloads and future digital media. Broadband also brings the prospect of downloadable episodic games closer to reality. And considering the Sony empire is such a major player within the music, movie and games industries, who better to be leading this kind of entertainment revolution?

HARD DRIVE, GOOD TIMES

To take full advantage of this network, PlayStation 2 owners will need to invest in the new Hard Disk Drive, planned for a July 2001 launch in Japan, along with *Final Fantasy X*, which will boast as yet unconfirmed HDD online features. Downloaded data will be stored on the 40 gigabyte HDD and you will be charged according to the tariffs set up by Sony for the data you want, whether it's a game, music files or movies.

Sony has teamed up with e-SCOTT, one of Japan's largest internet billing companies, to make sure all transactions will be secure, and it's likely a similar arrangement will be made on our shores. The initial set-up of the Japanese network will be seen as a template for the US and European servers, so we're keeping our fingers crossed. We've seen what an awesome achievement Sega's *Phantasy Star Online* on DC. Imagine what a sequel would be like on PS2...

CVG RECKONS

This is one of the most exciting announcements in recent gaming history and the power and clout of the names involved should make you sit up and listen. We'll have more on how the network is progressing as it happens.

THE SPEED CARRIES YOU THROUGH THE BARRIERS, THROUGH THE FEAR.

WWW.NORETURN.NET

Acclaim
www.acclaim.com
PlayStation
Dreamcast

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VANISHING POINT
PAST THE POINT OF NO RETURN

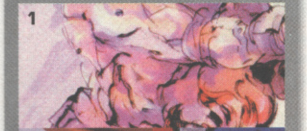
SPOT THE DAN

Spot where we've hidden Dan's pug ugly mug and you could win a Digimon Version 2. The first reader to send the correct page number on a postcard to our usual address marked Spot The Dan wins.

Last issue Dan was on page 31

GUESS WHO I AM

Do you know who these game stars are?



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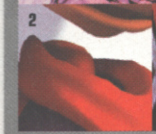

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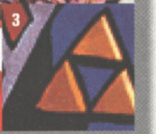


3

GIVE US A CLUE!

1 Indianna Jones hates 'em
2 France's greatest gaming star?
3 Never does duff games

ANSWERS

1 Solid Snake **2** Rayman **3** Link

2001'S MUST

IMAGINE AN

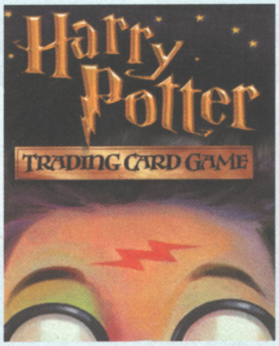
IMAGINE AN exhibition hall bigger than Wembley stadium, jam-packed with the coolest toys and games you're ever likely to see. Now imagine our over-excited Lee and resident Peter Pan Johnny let loose in such a wonderland, and you're starting to appreciate what it was like to be at the UK's biggest Toy and Game exhibition, Toy Fair 2001, held last January in London's Docklands.

As you might imagine it was a scene of total carnage with our two writers gleefully tearing up and down the aisles while suited business types and power-dressed PR girls looked on in horror. Why were we there? Well, we thought you might want to know what are going to be 2001's hottest toys before they hit the shops, so you can be at the front of the queue. So check this lot out and get your orders in now.

NUMBER FIVE

HARRY POTTER TRADING CARD GAME
COST: TBC
OUT: LATE 2001

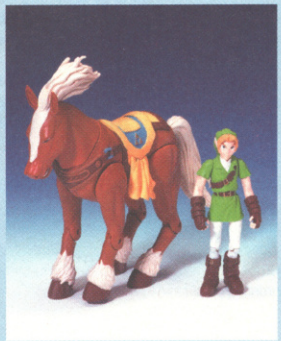
Expect a Potter marketing blitz as we get closer to the end of the year and the movie's release date. We had a few games of the prototype trading card game at Toy Fair and it's very clever and lots of fun. Wannabe wizards everywhere will love it, as will Pokémon Trading Card fans.



NUMBER FOUR

TOMB RAIDER: THE MOVIE FIGURES
COST: FROM £7.99
OUT: JUNE

It's like Action Man with knockers! There's a whole range of Raider toys heading your way in time for the movie's summer release date. These should sell like hot cakes, and for the first time we might see teenage boys playing with dolls. She sure would kick Barbie's ass, too.



NUMBER THREE

LEGEND OF ZELDA FIGURES
COST: £6.99
OUT: NOW

Relive all the best moments from Ocarina of Time and Majora's Mask with these beautiful Zelda toys. There are three to collect, Link, Ganondorf and Impa, and each comes with their own horse. A cool switch on the back makes them attack each other and they are a snip at the price. Look great as ornaments on your shelf.

NUMBER TWO

ELECTRIC MALIBU CRUISER
COST: £249-£299
OUT: SPRING

The brilliant street scooter that's powered by battery. Propels you at a brisk 6mph which won't get you a speeding ticket but saves on walking. Each battery recharge lasts about 45 minutes. Get saving 'cos when these things hit the streets they are going to be hot.

THAT'S ENTERTAINMENT!

WHAT'S COMING YOUR WAY ON DVD THIS MONTH. SLAP 'EM THE PS2 AND ENJOY

X-MEN

COST : £19.99
CERT: 12

WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

Good mutants take on bad mutants in that rare thing; a comic book adaptation which is actually any good. One of last summer's best blockbusters still looks the business on the small screen. Awesome effects and rollicking fight scenes combine with the coolest superheroes ever to stalk the planet for a movie that you'll watch over and over.

DVD EXTRAS

"Mutant Watch" documentary which alerts us to the danger of mutants in our midst, behind the scenes footage, trailers, TV spots and Hugh Jackman's audition tape. Watch the man who plays Wolverine earning his sideburns alongside co-star Anna Paquin.

★★★★★

U-572

COST : £19.99
CERT: 12

WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

Hollywood rewrites history once again as a bunch of American World War II heroes sneak aboard a Nazi sub to steal a top-secret decoding machine. Without the Nazis noticing of course. Fine on the action front, but the fact it was actually the Brits who performed all the heroics in this supposedly factual adventure which has left many fuming. Plenty of tension as sailors look at each other, waiting for the next depth charge to go bang.

DVD EXTRAS

Over two hours worth, spanning director's commentary, cast interviews, trailers and behind-camera goings-on. Enjoyable, but hardly original.

★★★

HAVE TOYS

WE WENT TO TOY FAIR 2001 TO CHECK OUT THE HOTTEST UPCOMING OBJECTS OF PLAYFUL DESIRE. AND HERE THEY ARE

WORDS **LEE & JOHNNY** PICS **KENNY P** IMAGES **VARIOUS**

SMACKDOWN
WWF
SMACKDOWN

NUMBER ONE

SMACKDOWN REAL SOUNDS ARENA
COST: £49.99
OUT: NOW

We love WWF as much as you lot surely do and this latest Smackdown ring had us supplexing each other with joy. It works like this: you fling your Tron-ready figures around the ring and as they hit the canvas, or bounce off the ropes, loads of authentic sound effects, music and speech comes blaring out. A top laugh, and guaranteed to really annoy your parents. The damn thing even recognises your wrestlers as they enter the ring. Believe us, this really rocks.

■ Multi Format
Crusty old classic platformer *Jet Set Willy* is being dusted off and is due for a big comeback on Game Boy Color, with next-gen console versions planned as well. If you're not old enough to remember the old Spectrum game, it practically defined the platform game genre single handedly.

■ **PlayStation 2**
Another candidate for worst kept secret in the games industry. Grim horror thriller *Alone in the Dark 4* is coming to PlayStation 2 in all its gothic glory. No news on a release date but Infogrames want it out as close as possible to the PlayStation and Game Boy Color versions (cough, rush job, splutter).

■ PlayStation
Sony has joined forces with mobile phone manufacturer Nokia to bring wireless gaming to Europe. The companies are working on a system to combine existing PlayStation consoles with mobile phones not only for gaming but also for downloading info.

■ **PlayStation 2**
Sony is entering the world of survival horror with *Phase Paradox*. As you would expect, bloodshed is high on the list of priorities, but Sony is focussed on making a scary experience in the style of the Aliens movies.

■ Game Cube
PC classic settlers is coming to the new Nintendo console, thanks to Ubisoft who has bought the original developers Bluebyte. A PlayStation 2 version is also on the way.

■ **I'll Be Back**
Infogrames has bought the rights to Schwarzenegger movie, The Terminator, plus Will Smith's Men In Black. They join La Femme Nikita on Infogrames' list of new movie licences for next-gen consoles.

SMALL SOLDIERS

COST: £19.99
CERT: 12

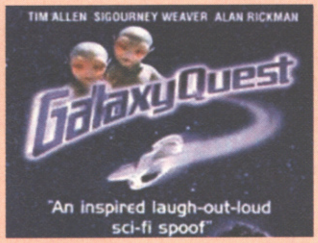
WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?
A ruthless toy company executive sticks military chips into his company's latest range of computerised action figures to make them more advanced, and all hell breaks loose. Only local boys Dunst and Smith can save their cosy neighbourhood from destruction, provided they aren't murdered by little girls' dolls first. From the guy who did Gremlins, there's plenty of gags, some good special effects and plenty of stuff gets smashed up. It's no classic, but still a good watch.

DVD EXTRAS
Unseen footage, games, cast and crew bios, trailer. Nothing too special but the film kinda makes up for it.

★★★

GALAXY QUEST

COST: £19.99
CERT: PG


TIM ALLEN SIGOURNEY WEAVER ALAN RICKMAN
Galaxy Quest
"An inspired laugh-out-loud sci-fi spoof"

WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?
Voice of Buzz Lightyear Tim Allen finds himself doing the space thing for real when some over-trusting aliens mistake the stars of a Star Trek-style TV show for actual intergalactic warriors. The cast get whisked off to outer space to fight an evil race intent on slaughter in a cool sci-fi comedy that sadly dips in the second half. If you like Star Trek, you'll wet yourself at the reams of in-jokes, and everyone will enjoy the aliens and their hilarious accents.

DVD EXTRAS
Loads of stuff to get excited about here, but the highlight is the commentary from the Thermians; the weirdly-voiced aliens from the movie. A good crack.

★★★

SCOOP!

THE PLAYERS' BEST FRIEND

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Computer and Video Games uses
Hercules
3D cards to put life into *Undying*

Dennis PPA

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LEE'S LAB TESTS

GAMING ADD-ONS UNDER THE MICROSCOPE

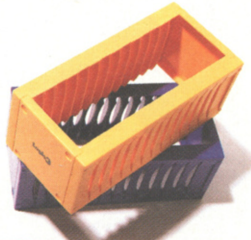
The Prof is lost in music this month with a couple of nifty MP3-related treats, and you can barely walk past the lab without hearing him croaking along to "Girls Just Wanna Have Fun". Maybe the egg-headed product king is trying to sing away his disappointment over the PSone screen...

SCREEN STATION

PSONE **£99.99**

Portable PSone playing is here! Top marks to those BBI bods for getting one out before Sony, but you may be underwhelmed by the results. You get the meaty screen unit with stereo speakers, plus an in-car adapter for your cash. Sadly, there's no headphone jack. The biggest problem is that the back-lit, on-screen image isn't high-res enough for playing in a well-lit room. Take the unit into a darkened space and the quality improves, but playing text-heavy games like *FFIX* gave us headaches. We can't see how Sony's screen can be much better either, so it may be the whole PSone screen concept is flawed. Unnecessary. Expensive too. ★★

BIGBEN INTERACTIVE
TFT COLOR LCD MONITOR



GAMES TOWER

GB/GBC **£4.99**

Keep your GB cartridges stacked tidy and dust free with these tasty twin towers. Does just what it says on the tin but still manages to be pretty cool. You get two towers – yellow and blue – each holding 14 carts, for under a fiver. ★★★★

XPLODER
PRO-MEDIA-PACK
MP3 DC
100 TRACK MP3 DISC

EXPLODER PRO-MEDIA PACK

DC **£29.99**

An excellent 3 CD pack that includes both the excellent Xploder cheat system for DC, and also MP3 DC, which lets you listen to MP3 files on your console. You'll need a CD burner to get the most out of the MP3 kit though. ★★★★★

SMART MP3 300CD

CD/MP3 **£119.99**

Another perfect piece of kit if you're into MP3 music. It works as both a CD player and an MP3 player, but you'll need a PC with a CD burner to listen to downloaded tracks, as there's no internal memory. Great sound quality. ★★★★

WE'RE NUMBER 1!

CVG IS OFFICIALLY THE BIGGEST-SELLING MULTIFORMAT GAMES MAG IN THE UK! ALL THANKS TO YOU LOYAL CVG READERS

WORDS: **LEE SKITTRELL**

BRAND NEW

BRAND NEW sales figures show that Computer and Videogames magazine is once again Britain's most popular multiformat title. Figures released by the Audited Bureau of Circulation – an independent group that keeps tabs on sales statistics for magazines and newspapers – show that after a year of trailing in the Number Two slot, CVG is back on top where we've been for much of our 19-year history. All of which means every time you buy a copy of CVG you know you're getting the best multiformat mag around.

STAT CRUNCHIN'

The ABC figures are worked out on a basis of six-month periods and represent an average monthly circulation. Figures for July to December 2000 are: CVG – 45,606; GamesMaster – 44,848; and Edge 28,376.

YOU ARE NOT ALONE

This compares with the last period's figures of 43,509, 50,722 and 29,533 respectively, making CVG the only one of the three to actually gain readers. How many of the last six issues below that helped make us number one did you buy?

computer and video Games
DINOMITE!

ISSUE 224
July 2000

computer and video Games
BIGGEST ISSUE EVER!
THE NEW ZELDA!

ISSUE 225
August 2000

computer and video Games
POKEMON YELLOW GUIDE
WWF SPECIAL

ISSUE 226
September 2000

computer and video Games
NINTENDO'S NEXT-GENS
"AWESOME!"

ISSUE 227
October 2000

computer and video Games
TONY HAWK'S 2
LARA EXPOSED!

ISSUE 228
November 2000

computer and video Games
BEG, BORROW OR STEAL
PS2 OR DC? THE VERDICT
KANED TO DEATH

ISSUE 229
December 2000

THANK YOU!

The only reason CVG is the number-one multi-format mag is because you've been buying it and we want to give you a big wet sloppy kiss to say "Ta!". Our glorious leader, Al says: "As always, the mag's success boils down to our loyal readers and we'll continue to do our best to make CVG the hottest mag around. But this time, we're going to make sure it's for ever."

WIN £100

TO SPEND ON WHATEVER YOU WANT

1 Sega has announced it will cease production of Dreamcast consoles in which month this year?
A March
B August
C December

2 What genre of game is *Summoner* on PS2?
A A god game
B A real-time strategy game
C A role-playing game

3 How long did it take our Johnny to complete the utterly underwhelming PS2 game *The Bouncer*?
A Under an hour
B One hour
C Over one hour

4 The three heroes of *Starfighter* on PS2 are called...
A Rhys, Vana and Nym
B Earth, Wind and Fire
C None of the above

5 In PS2 zombie slasher *Onimusha* your weapons include a...
A Sword
B Pair of Uzis
C Lightsabre

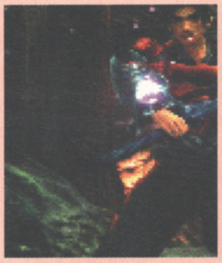
6 Robot action-fest *ZOE* scored how many stars in our review?
A Less than *Knockout Kings 2001*
B Same as *KK2001*
C More than *KK2001*

7 What format is the game version of movie series Evil Dead to be released on?
A N64
B DC
C GBC

8 When is PC game *Emperor: Battle for Dune* due for release?
A Before June
B After June
C TBC

9 Game Boy's next Pokémon adventure, *Pokémon Crystal* is a special edition of...
A *Gold* and *Silver*
B *Snap* and *Stadium*
C *Pinball* and *Hey Pikachu*

10 Which next-generation console game is this rather tasty screenshot from?
A *Onimusha*
B *Summoner*
C *Evil Dead*



LAST MONTH'S ANSWERS

1/ A N64
2/ A beat 'em up
3/ B 4
4/ B *Dark Cloud*
5/ C 3
6/ C Germany
7/ B 29.99
8/ B *Tropica*
9/ A *The Bouncer*
10/ B *Fear Effect 2*

The lucky winner of Issue 231's compo and one hundred quid is....
M Lacey, Notts

IT'S EASY TO ENTER

Post to us at: Win Some Money 232, Computer and Video Games, 30 Cleveland Street, London W1P 5FF. The first correct entry out of the hat wins. Entries must be in by: April 16th, 2001. So get yer fingers out.

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Games junkie? Get a fix at QXL.

TOP 5 trades this month

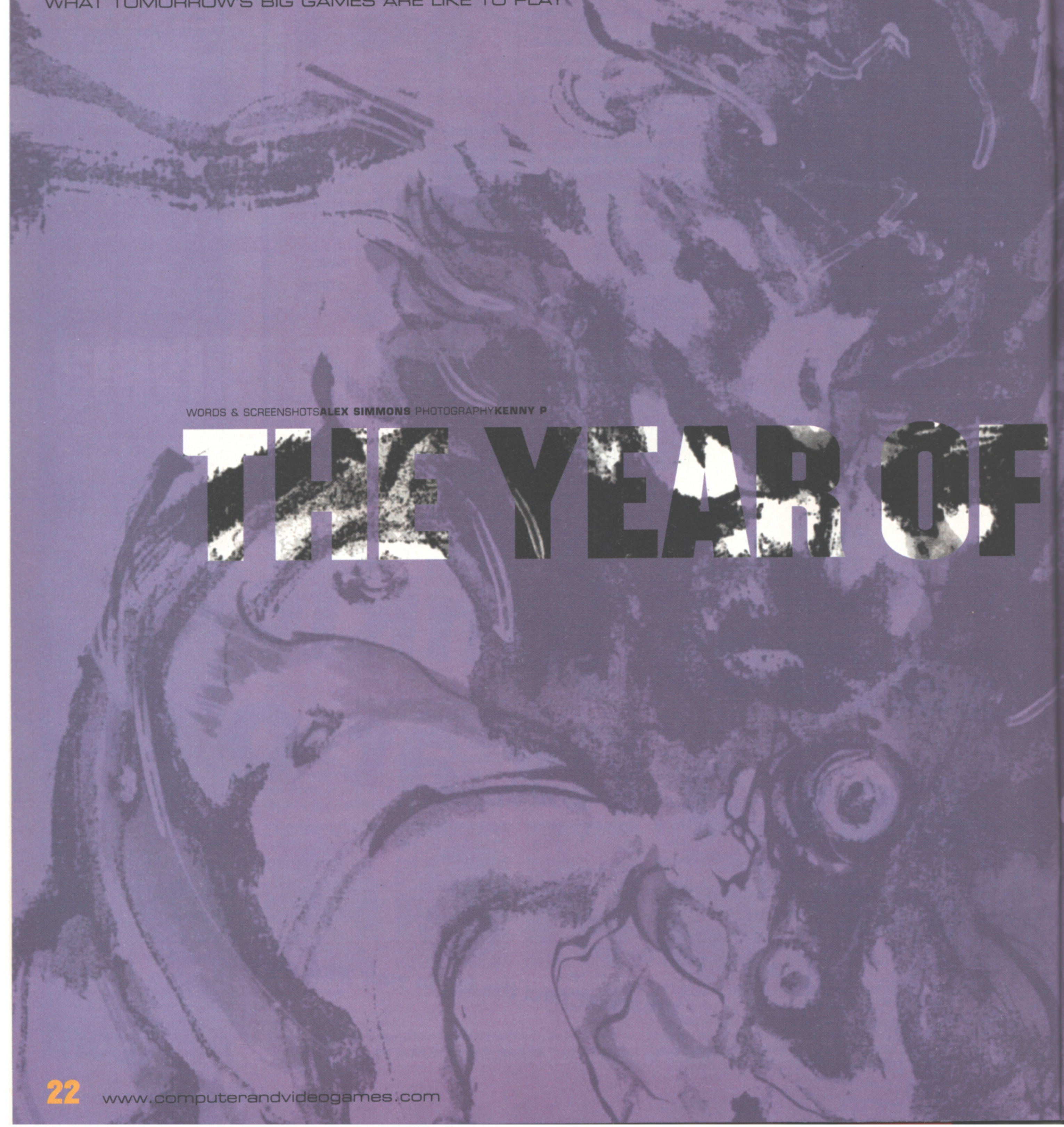
▲1	Command & Conquer: Red Alert 2
▼2	The Sims: Livin' It Up
▶3	Deus EX
▲4	Colin McRae Rally 2
▼5	Quake III Arena

Buy or Sell? Go QXL. Shoot 'em ups. Arcade games. Simulations. Platform games. Role playing. Strategy games. The latest, the greatest, the best PC games to buy, talk about, hear about. **Whatever puts the fire in your wire, plug into QXL.**

QXL.com

IN THE SHOPS SOON

WHAT TOMORROW'S BIG GAMES ARE LIKE TO PLAY



WORDS & SCREENSHOTS**ALEX SIMMONS** PHOTOGRAPHY**KENNY P**

THE YEAR OF

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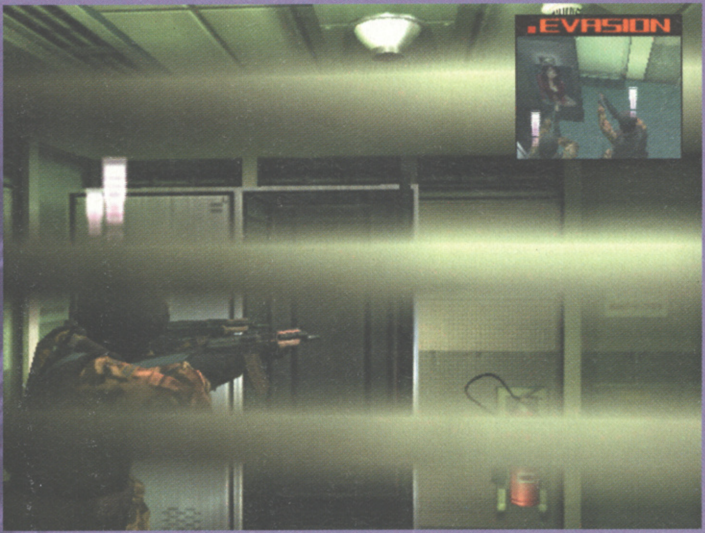
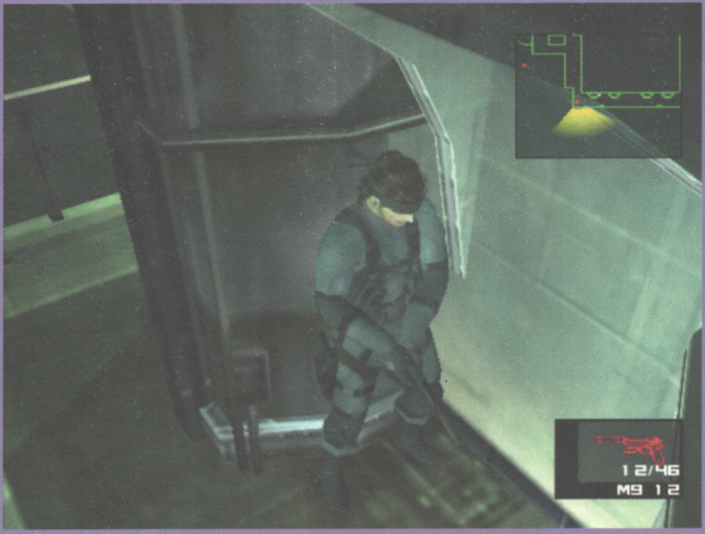




THE SNAKE

CVG HAS PLAYED *METAL GEAR SOLID 2*. THESE ARE THE SHOTS TO PROVE IT. ENOUGH SAID

METAL GEAR SOLID 2: SONS OF LIBERTY

*OUT***2002** *FORMAT***PLAYSTATION2**

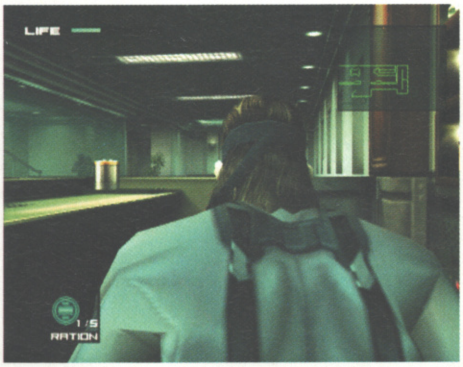
Who do you trust? Some half-baked mag which claims to have played the biggest game ever, then forces the same old screenshots down your neck? Or CVG, with the first ever pics of *Metal Gear Solid 2* in action? It's a no brainer, because every screenshot and snippet of info you see over the next seven pages comes from us playing the game. See the coolest bits in minute detail, understand how it plays and, most importantly, realise why this will blow you away when it's released in just under a year's time.

Luckily, you don't have to wait 12 months to play *Metal Gear 2* yourself. In fact, you only have to wait a few weeks because there's a fully playable demo that comes bundled with *ZOE*. Soon it'll be your hands slowly squeezing the last gasps of air from that guard's throat, and your eyes that well up with excitement when you check out the incredible rain effects for the first time.

INTO THE PANDEMONIUM

Before you slip into Snake's jungle boots, check out the intro sequence. The camera pans across Washington Bridge, which spans the Hudson river in New York, the torrential rain distorting the stream of headlights from cars as they pass. On the sidewalk, a lone figure walks through the downpour, a plastic poncho covering his silhouette. A fag hangs limply from his mouth.

Then it all kicks off. The poncho flies off in a gust of wind and Snake sprints along the bridge. His Predator-style stealth suit flickers into action, and Snake's ghost-like shadow leaps over the edge of the bridge and bungees down to the boat passing underneath. It's like a scene out of The Matrix, with you in the leading role, and it's made all the more cinematic by the sweeping



Solid Snake proves mullets are coming back into fashion

orchestral score, penned by the same guy who wrote the soundtrack to the movie Enemy of the State.

When Snake eventually lands on deck, he witnesses some of the most gruesome violence you'll see in a videogame. Guards patrolling the boat are ambushed by terrorists, blood from their slit necks spraying the walkways. Another is viciously hacked in the back, and repeatedly skewered as he falls to the ground. If you go queasy at the sight of crimson, close your eyes for this!

BACK IN CONTROL

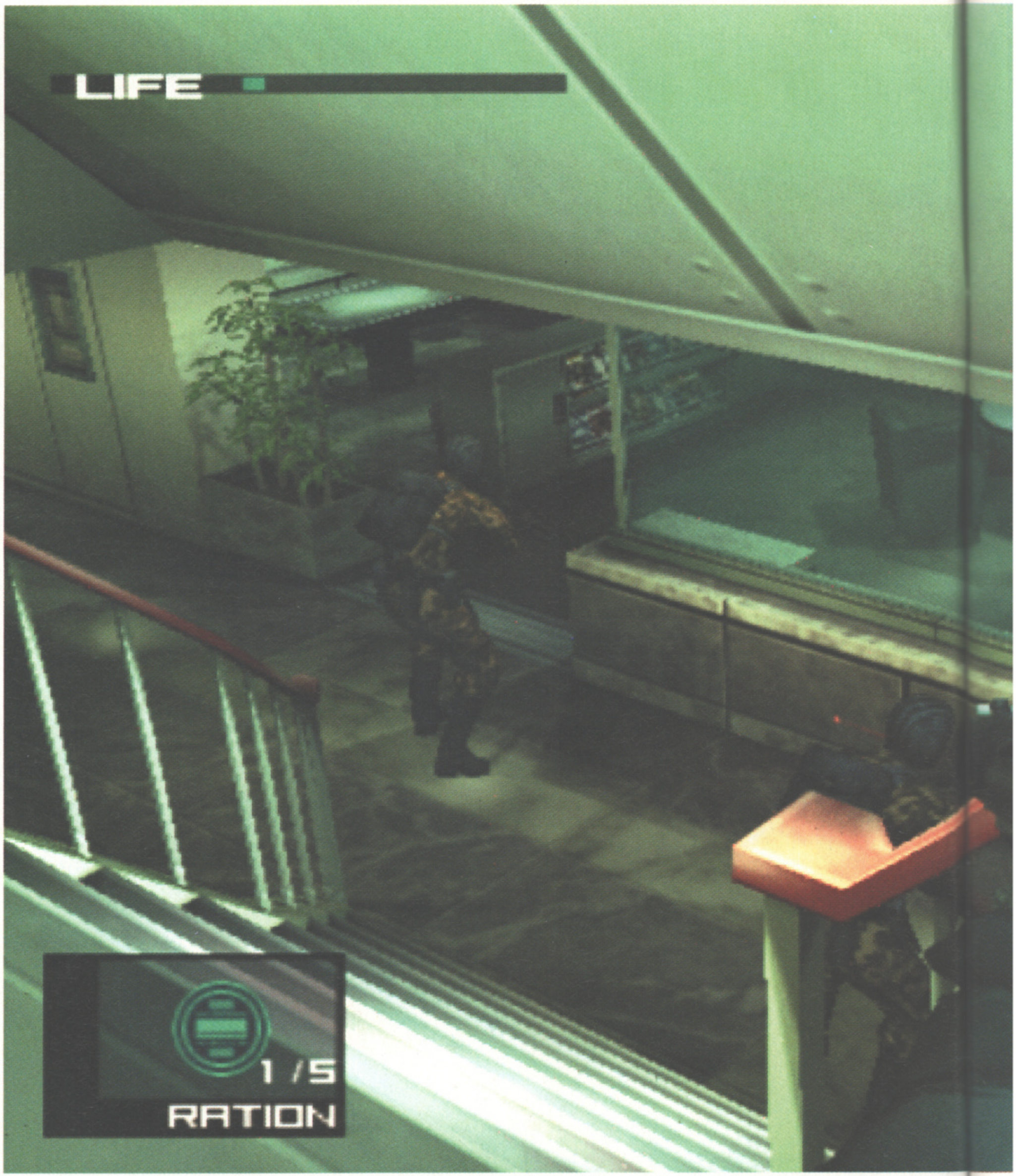
Within seconds you're in the driving seat, and if you've ever played the first *Metal Gear* it's all surprisingly familiar. You gaze down on Snake from above, using the left analogue stick to explore the ship. Ease the stick forward and he'll sneak, keeping noise to a minimum. Push it hard and he'll run, which is great for getting out of tight situations but no good if you want to remain undetected.

The inventory system works in exactly the same way as the first *MGS*. Use the shoulder buttons to highlight either the weapon or object inventory, and the D-pad to cycle through stuff you're carrying. A lot of the gear Snake carries is the same as before. His trademark pack of Marlboro Reds is stashed in the pocket of his flak jacket, and when he sparks up and takes a drag, his energy bar starts to plummet! Should have paid attention to the warning on the side of the packet. This anti-smoking thing has got everywhere.

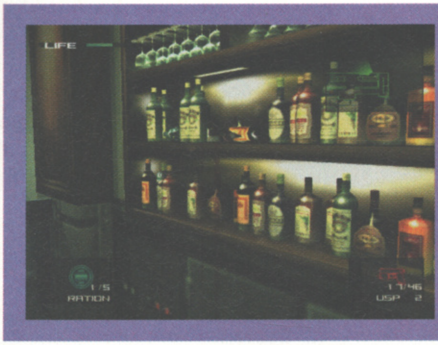
There's also an anti-personnel sensor which makes the pad vibrate whenever a guard gets close, and a pair of binoculars which, rather predictably, allow you to look at things far away. However, take a moment to look through the scope and you start to appreciate the level of detail squeezed into *MGS2*'s environment.

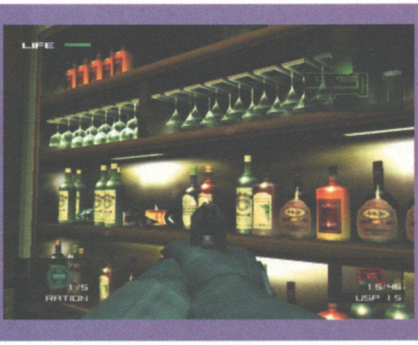
SWIMMING IN DETAIL

From the safety of cover at the back of the ship, where you start, you use the scope to peer up at the walkways above. Not much happening. But zoom in and you start to pick out shapes: the silhouette of a guard walking past, the torch strapped to his gun briefly lighting the cold metal of the ship. Look up further and your view starts to blur as the rain spatters against the scope's lens. The longer you stare into the clouds, the harder it is to see, until you pan back down and the water pours onto the floor, clearing



Target the guards' heads and they'll hit the deck in seconds. However, aim for a limb and the tranquiliser dart takes longer to take effect, so the soldier has a few seocnds to fire off a couple of rounds or use his radio to call for back-up



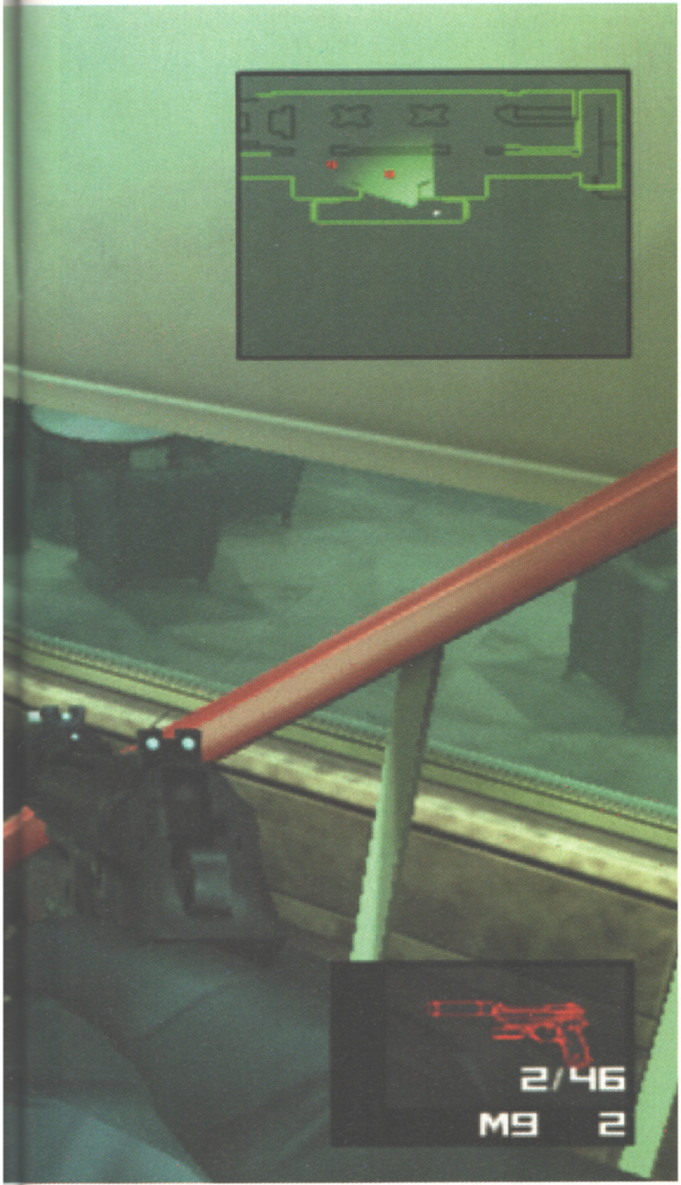


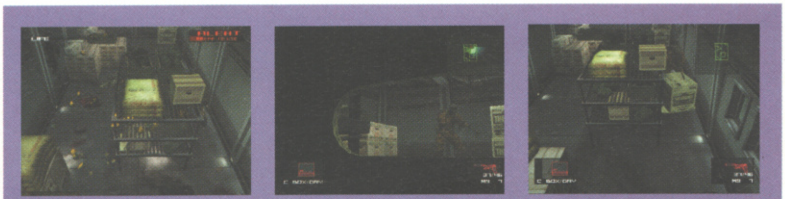
HAVE YOU GOT THE BOTTLE FOR IT?

Smashing the bottles in the ship's galley is more fun than chucking empties at a brick wall, and there's no danger of puncturing your eyeball with a flying shard of glass. But rather than just being a cool way of making one hell of a mess, it also demonstrates the frightening level of detail crammed into this awesome game.

First off, aim at the neck of a bottle and fire a shot. The top will crack off and fall on the floor and the remaining bit wobbles and knocks into other bottles. Shoot it in the centre and the whole bottle shatters in two, leaving nasty jagged edges. Alternatively plug a round in the bottom of the bottle and watch the top fall onto the shelf.

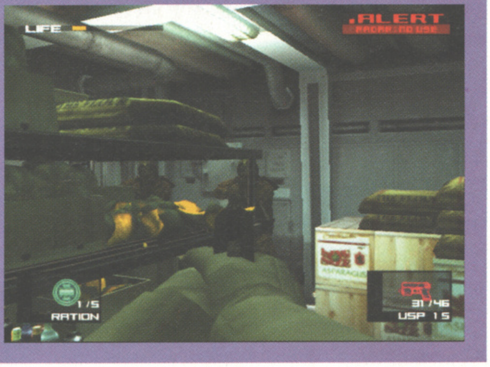
Thing is, all the bottles in the bar are empty. To watch the wine flow, nip into the storage room and open fire with your pistol – there are racks of full bottles to have fun with!

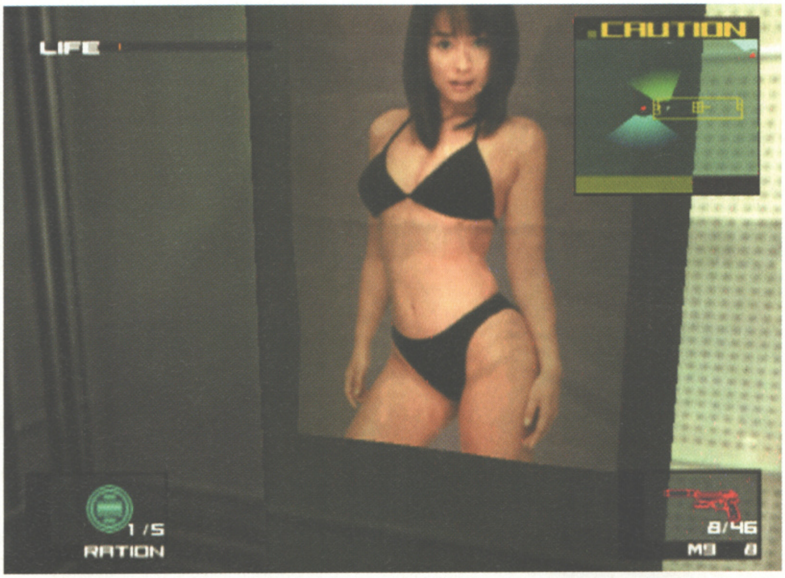




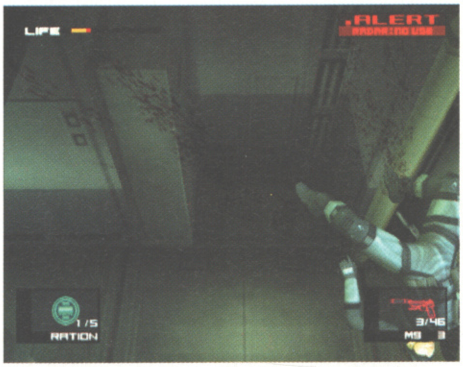
BOX OF TRICKS

The storage room is *MGS2*'s toy chest. Shoot the box of melons and bits of fruit fly everywhere. Shoot the flour bags and white powder pours over the floor. But best of all is when the guard walks in. Snake can hide inside the nearby cardboard box, looking out through the handle hole. When the guard notices the mess on the floor he gets suspicious. Stay motionless inside the box and eventually he'll stop searching and leave. But move an inch and he'll walk up to the box and kick it, before lifting it in the air leaving you a sitting duck squatting on the floor.





The first time we saw this locker, we maybe spent a *little* too long admiring the fine detail and got busted by a guard



Blood paints the walls after Snake is riddled with lead. Nasty

> I've played the demo for hours and I'm still finding new bits. Forget the real world, life in *Metal Gear 2* is better.

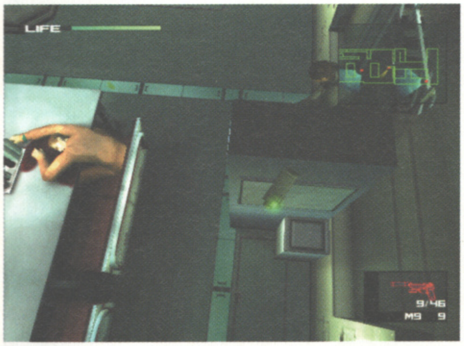
your vision. It's the smallest touch, but it's just one of *MGS2*'s countless details that help envelop you in what we reckon is the most believable game environment ever devised.

Other examples aren't too far away, either. Switch to first-person mode and you see exactly what Snake sees. Then draw your gun by pressing and holding the shoot button, and you'll look down the barrel of your pistol, its laser sight cutting through the rain and pinpointing its target in the distance. Take out spotlights simply by plugging them with a single round, or hone your skills by taking on one of the terrorists as they march past.

WALK SOFTLY, CARRY A BIG STICK

You'll only succeed in *Metal Gear 2* by being stealthy, but it's inevitable you'll encounter a few scrapes along the way. Luckily there are loads of different ways to deal with situations, and that's the coolest thing about the demo that comes with *ZOE* – though you can complete it in a matter of minutes if you rush through it, you'll spend hours checking out the hidden extras and cool secrets this game has to offer.

Bagging a guard with your dart gun is the easiest and most effective way to clear the way ahead, but seasoned Snake players will want to get up close and personal. Like the original, Snake can sneak up behind a guard and grab him by the throat. The guard will kick and struggle, but tapping the grab button slowly tightens Snake's grip until you hear the crack of the guard's neck breaking.



Use the radar to check out where the nearest guards are

> To be honest, I've been underwhelmed by PS2 so far. But when I played *MGS2* it blew me away. Awesome.

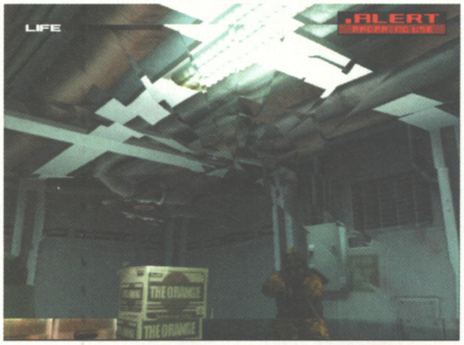
Alternatively use the terrorist as a human shield, dragging him behind you to prevent other guards from opening fire. Be careful though, as these guys are intelligent – use a dead guard for a shield and the enemy will attack regardless.

Snake can also fist-fight, punching and kicking until the enemy slumps to the ground unconscious. This is much tougher than staying back and shooting with the tranquilliser pistol, as you're often surrounded during a fight. What's cool, though, is how the terrorists fight back. Some kick, others punch, and those carrying riot shields lash out with them, knocking Snake to the floor before backing off and letting rip with machine-guns before he has the chance to recover. Well trained, this lot.

UNDERCOVER BLUES

Avoiding the guards is much harder inside the ship, because there are that many more ways for them to pick up the scent. The wet footprints you leave behind after clambering in from the pouring rain through the bulkhead door are a total giveaway but, short of towel drying the soles of your boots, there's nothing you can do about it. You'll just have to make sure no-one who sees it lives to tell the tale. Likewise, casting your shadow around a corner can easily catch the eye of a patrolling guard, so stick close to the wall and only make your move when you know their backs are turned. You've got to think on the move to stay unseen.

Blood is bad news too, not just because your health bar depletes when your body's gushing the red stuff after receiving a nasty wound, but because it leaves a visible trail on the floor the enemy can follow. Ducking in a darkened corner or locker will throw them off for a few seconds, but the only way to get them off your back full-time is to strap up the wound using one of the bandages scattered around the ship.



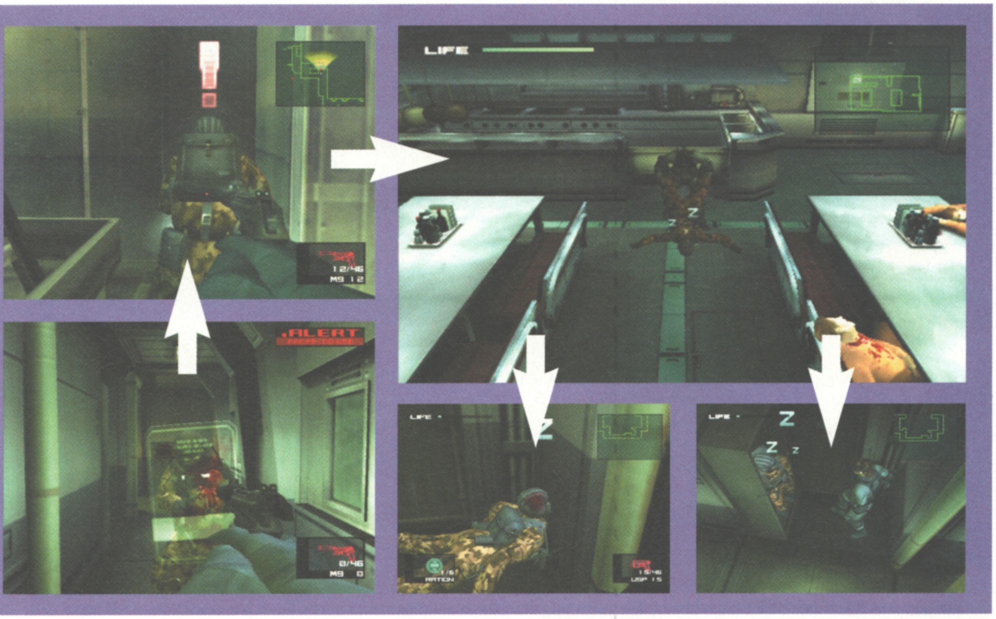
The game screen shatters when Snake takes a bullet in the face

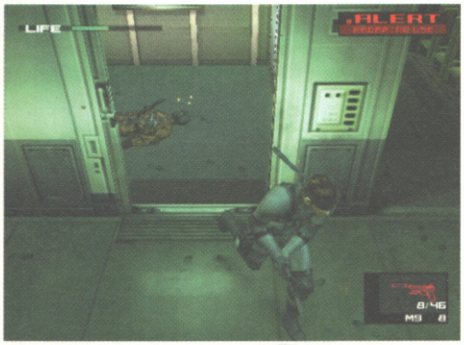
HEAVY SEDATION

Armed only with a tranquilliser dart gun when he first lands on deck, Snake faces an uphill struggle against the legions of terrorist guards that patrol the ship. However, in the right hands, this handgun can be more effective (and certainly less conspicuous) than any rapid-fire machine gun. You've just go to know how to use it.

Switch to first-person mode and draw your gun by holding the shoot button. You can then aim the laser sight by moving the left analogue stick. Where you aim, however, is all important. Plug a dart in an unwary sentry's head and he'll be out for the count before he's even realised the shot was fired. But aim slightly off-target and hit his chest or, even worse, a leg or arm, and the sedative takes longer to work its way through his veins, giving him the chance to fire off a couple of rounds or call for back-up as he realises what's happening.

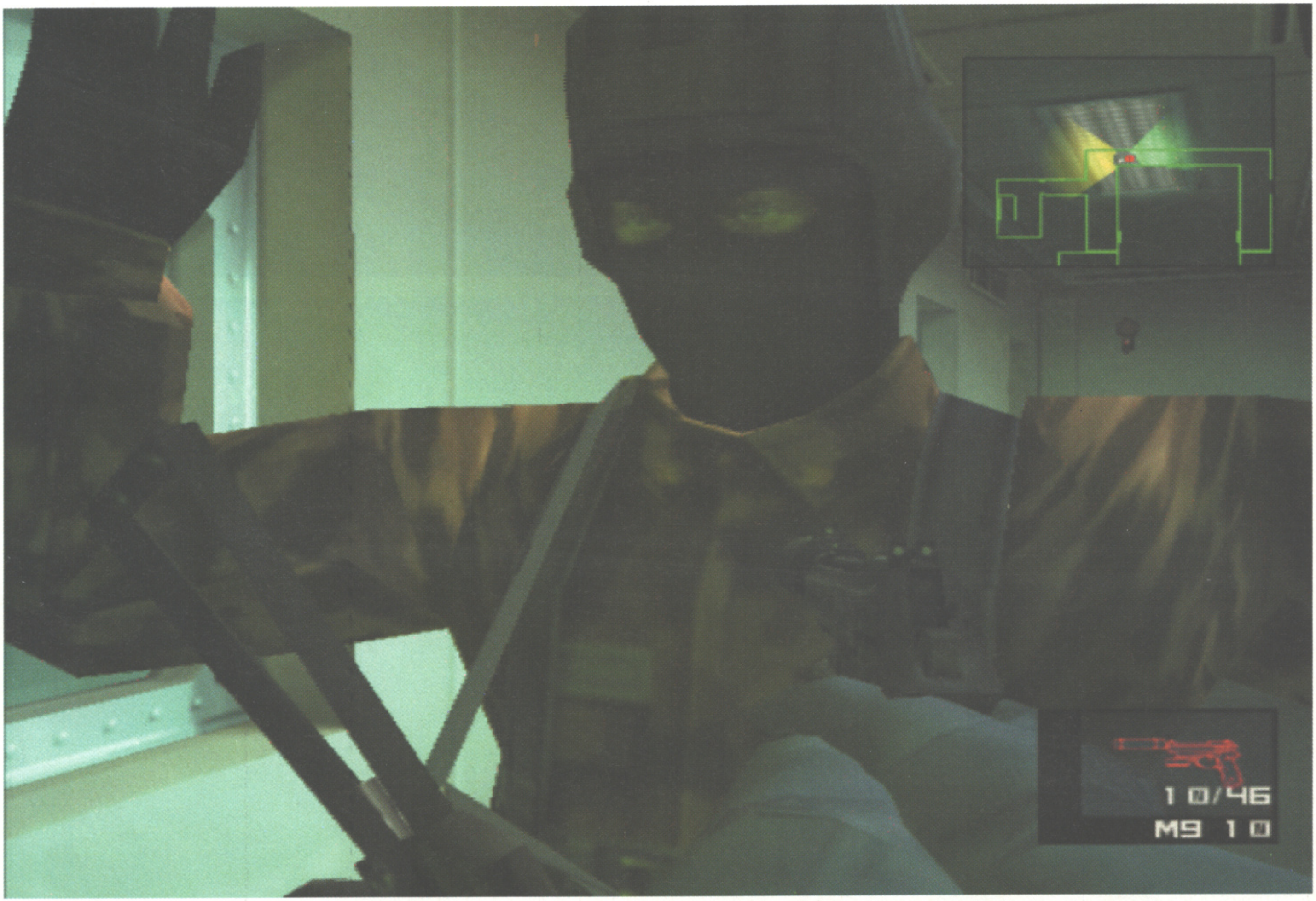
But getting a guard to hit the deck is only half the battle. You need to get rid of your handiwork so other patrolling grunts don't stumble across the evidence. You can either chuck the body overboard or drag it to a locker. If you really want a laugh, though, shoot the radio on their backs and wait for them to regain consciousness. They'll shake their head then, when they realise something's wrong, try to call for help. But when the radio doesn't respond, they'll shake it around before throwing it on the floor and running to set off the nearest alarm.





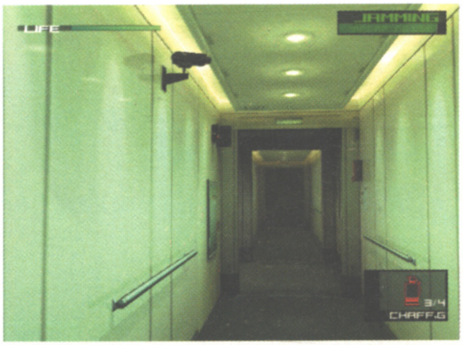
Punch the guards to knock them out, then shoot them in the head

> *MGS* on the PSone was totally fantastic so I had high hopes for the sequel. But I never expected it to be this good.

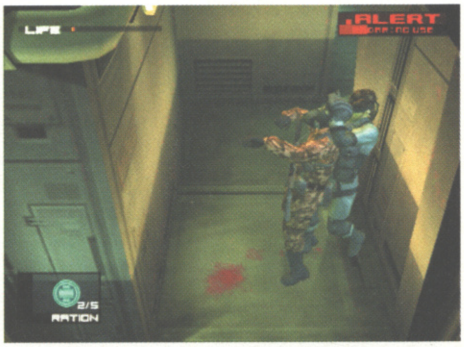


Aim at the guard's head or crotch and he'll shake with fear, then he'll drop a ration pack or some bandages. The detail up close really is incredible, especially when it's all running so smoothly

> "There are so many amazing touches that you can forget there is more to do than just looking for all the cool details."



Use chaff grenades or a well-placed shot to knock out the camera



Use guards as human shields by grabbing them by the throat

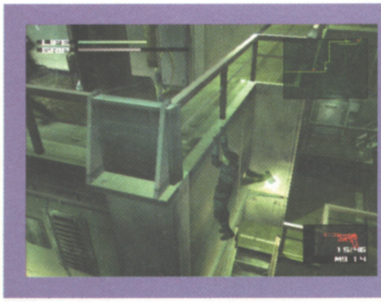
Rations, also located around the ship, replace lost energy, while gulping down diazepam calms your nerves and your aim, making it easier to fire accurately under pressure. Ammo is the bonus you'll be most desperate for though, and there's plenty of this around – if you know where to look. And here's where...

Creep up behind a guard and draw your weapon, but don't fire. They'll surrender and raise their hands, giving you the advantage. Step around to face them from the front and switch to first-person mode. Then aim at either their head or crotch. They'll shake with fear, dropping whatever ammo they're carrying. You can even do this with corpses, picking up the dead body and then dropping it to empty their pockets of goodies.

SMILE, YOU'RE ON CAMERA

Patrolling terrorists aren't the only dangers to keep an eye out for. Like in the first instalment there are cameras which, if they spot you, raise the alarm. You can either creep past by keeping your back close to the wall or throw a chaff grenade. When detonated, this temporarily scrambles any electronic gadgets nearby, allowing you to pass unseen. However, this also screws with your radar so you'll have to go it alone for a few seconds, hoping you don't stumble into a guard before the effects of the grenade wear off.

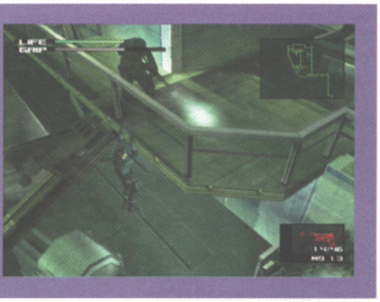
Stun grenades are just as effective, but against troops rather than technology. Chuck one, stand back and wait for the resulting flash, which stuns any nearby guards while also shattering fragile objects in its blast radius. Stand in the storage room and fire a



WANNA PLAY HANGMAN?

Though he's no slouch, there comes a time when Snake knows there's no option but to hang around for a bit. And we're not talking smoking a few fags outside the local shopping centre checking out the passing totty. You're on deck sneaking along a walkway towards the bridge. You can hear a guard approaching. You're about to run off in the opposite direction when your radar reveals another terrorist is barring your escape. You're trapped. But just as the guard is about to turn the corner and spot you, you leap over the gantry and cling on for dear life as the goon walks past, utterly unaware of your presence.

Hell, you can even jump over the edge of the boat and hang from the side, looking down at the water below. But just watch your grip – Snake can only hang on for so long, and waste too much time clinging by your fingertips to that slippery metal with the rain lashing down and Fox Hound's number one spy's grip will fail and you'll meet a watery grave.



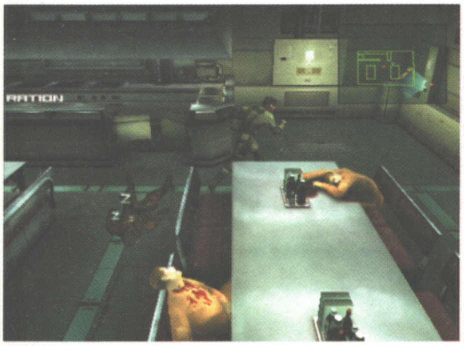
stun grenade and watch as the box of melons explode, showering the walls and floor with chunks of fleshy yellow fruit. Very cool, and a sure fire way to rid yourself of any destructive urges.

However, pistol freaks will want to hold out for the USP, a semi-automatic 9mm handgun which rips through muscle and bone with ease. One shot in the head from this baby and their brains are decorating the floor, but it makes one hell of a racket. Because there's no silencer screwed on the front of the barrel, each shot ricochets off the ship's metal bulkheads, alerting any nearby guards. This baby should only come out as a last resort.

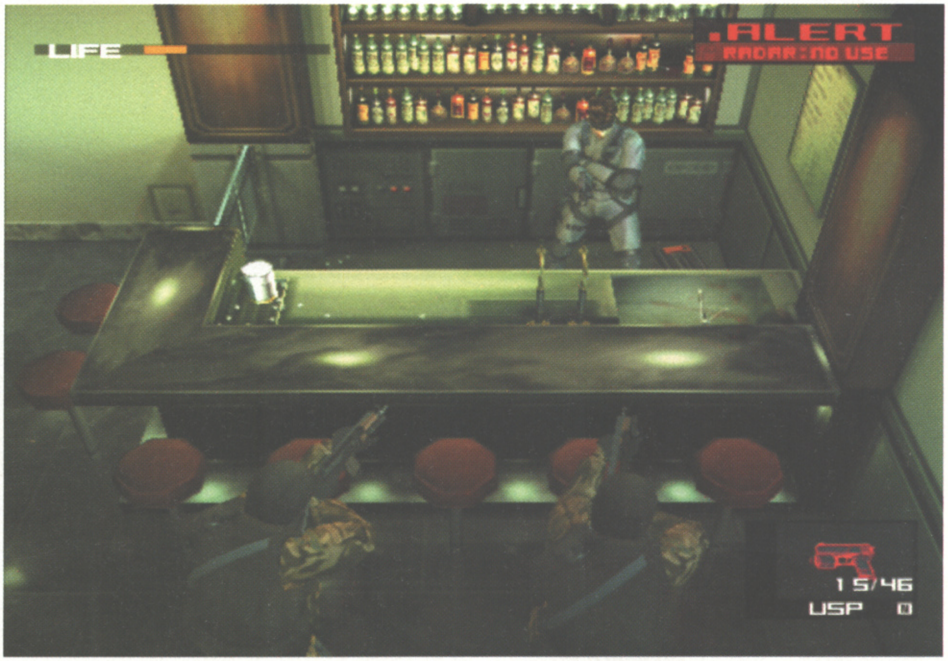
THE SHAPE OF THINGS TO COME

Though what you'll be able to play come mid-March is only a taster of what the full game will be like, it's still an unmissable experience quite unlike any other game you might have clapped eyes on. Make no mistake, this is not just another racing game, or beat 'em up sequel with slightly sharper graphics than its PSone predecessor.

It does remain completely faithful to the original *Metal Gear*, but only in the same way an early music demo sounds like a finished album version. The basic chords – in *Metal Gear 2*s case the game mechanics – may be the same, but the finished product is filled out with a much richer, fuller sound – in this instance the incredible game world made capable by PlayStation 2. Know one thing: miss it and you'll be missing out, big style.



Set off a stun greande here to smash the ketchup bottles!



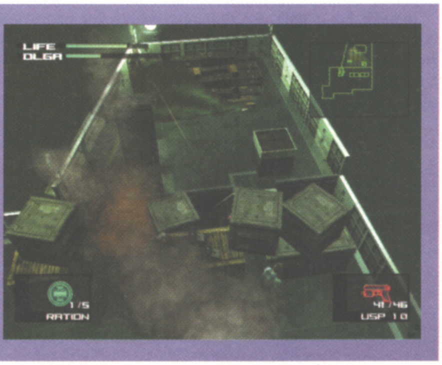
Bullets rip through Snake and shatter the bottles on the shelf. Shoot from the hip in this view or switch to first-person and aim carefully

> "Unlike many next-gen titles, this is genuinely pushing back the boundaries. The attention to detail is staggering."

LIFE
OLGA
We've shared everything -- all the bad and all the good.

WOMEN TROUBLES

During the intro sequence you're introduced to the roughneck Russian commander who's in control of the terrorist team that's hijacked the ship. And at the end of the demo, you get scrap it out with Olga, an athletic female commando with more hair under her arms than on her head, and one of his trusted lieutenants. In true bizarre *MGS* plot twist style, she also happens to be the daughter of the Russian officer and pregnant at that. Not that it stops Snake filling her sorry ass full of lead, though.



CVG RECKONS

MGS2 *is the first title to fully demonstrate the power of PS2. Even if you hate robot games, buy* ZOE *just for the demo – it'll be the best £40 you'll spend this year.*

Can you afford

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to go to university?

a) Graduates earn on average 20% more over their working lives than people who only have A-levels.

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*see (a) above

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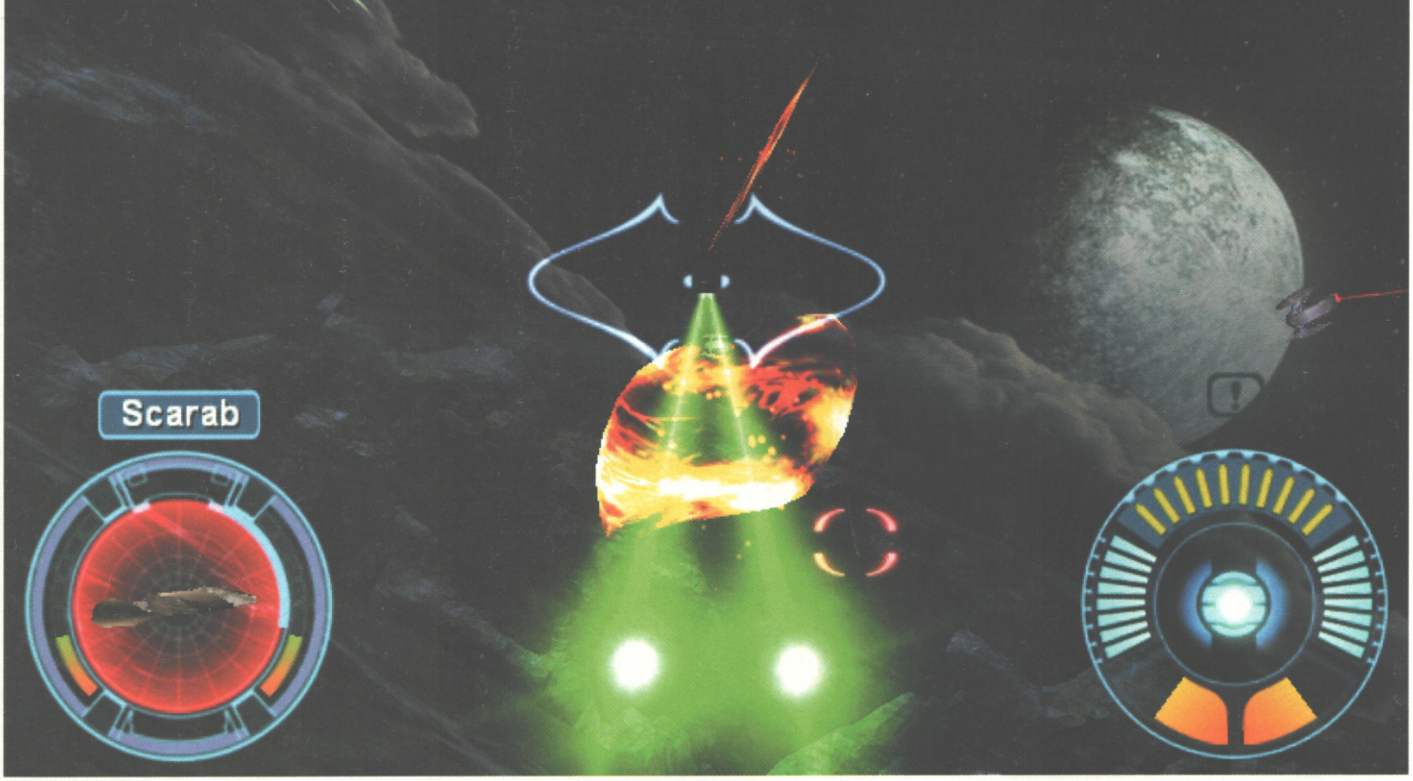
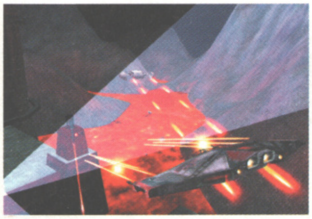
STARRY STARRY

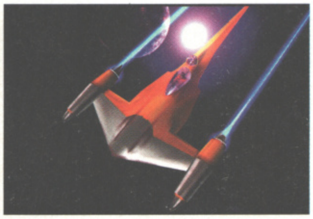
EMOTION ENGINE + THE FORCE = THE ULTIMATE STAR WARS GAME?



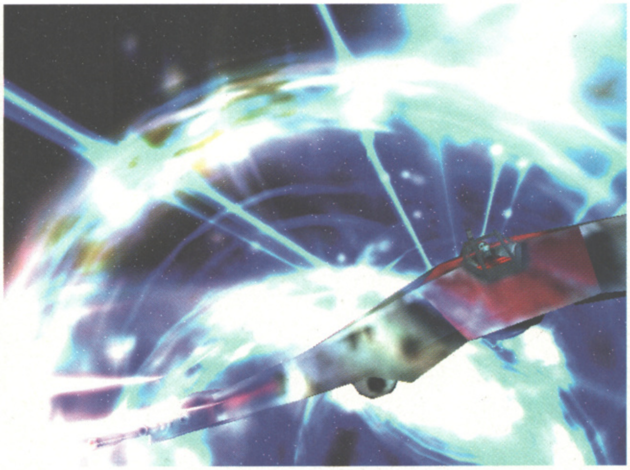
The trouble with Star Wars games is they've got the best sci-fi films ever to live up to. But for a change, *Starfighter* looks like being one of the few that do actually make your Star Wars dreams come true



Ground attack can be a tricky affair. Fire!



Rhys' tasty N-1 Naboo Starfighter is sure to be more than a few players' favourite ship

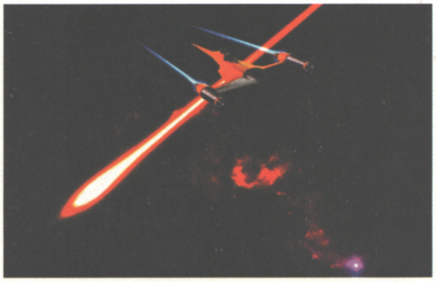


Graphics are mostly lush in *Starfighter*, like when the screen fills with stunning special effects in battle. But sometimes the textures are a little flat looking, especially in cut-scenes

STAR WARS: STARFIGHTER

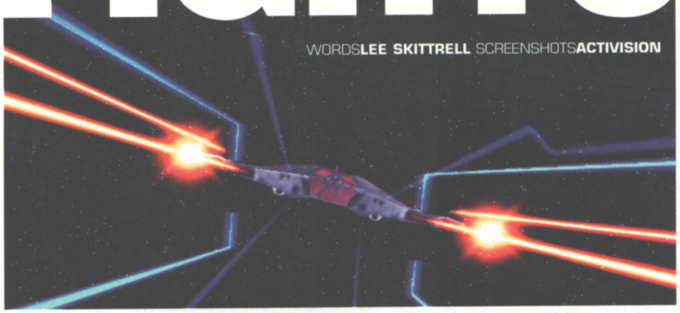
OUT **LATE MARCH** FORMAT **PS2**

You'd think that given the scope and potential of the Star Wars licence, the guys at LucasArts couldn't fail to make brilliant videogames. And it's true that when they get it right, with such Jedi-tastic treats as *Rogue Squadron*, *Episode 1 Racer* and *X-Wing Vs Tie Fighter*, they get it very right. But likewise, when LucasArts foul up, it really does it in style – as *Jedi Power*



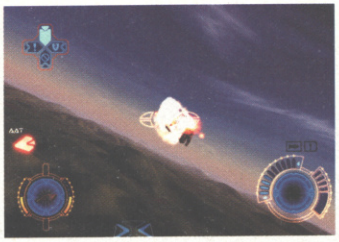
Top laser-dodging action in your Pikachu-coloured Starfighter

FIGHTS

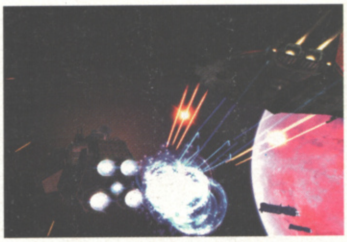


WORDS**LEE SKITTRELL** SCREENSHOTS**ACTIVISION**

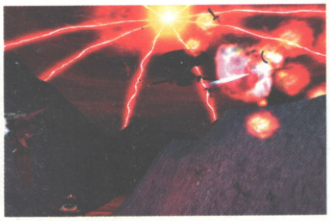
Neeaaoooow! Scream at your TV as you pilot your sexy space fighters around the Naboo system. Aerial dogfights are always good – and when they're aerial *Star Wars* dogfights, they're even better



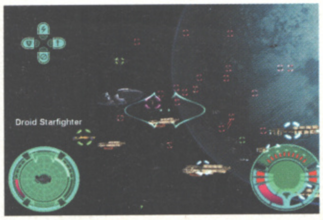
Mid-air explosion joy! Check the clouds too. Yum



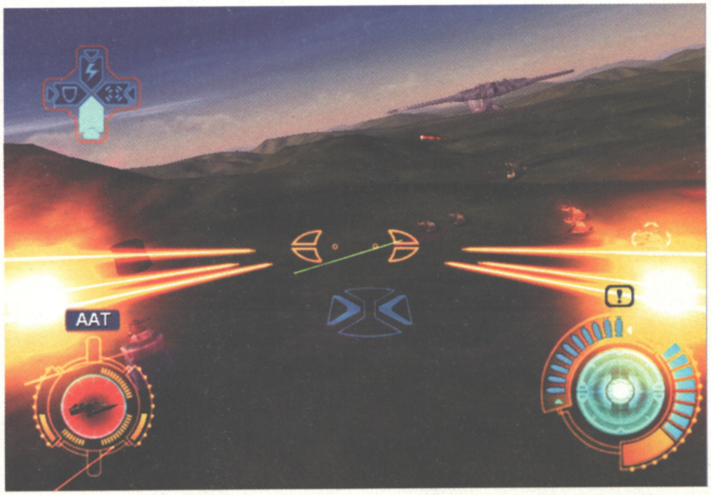
Pink planets, blue explosions. Not this year's look



Here you have to take out the generators that create that pretty red forcefield. Tricky



The amount of fighters and craft on-screen at any one time is staggering. Check this lot out



Stray laser fire rakes the surface killing innocent Gungans in droves. Let's hope Jar Jar's among them

***Battles* and *The Phantom Menace* prove pretty conclusively. The big question, then, is will PlayStation 2's first Star Wars game be a Force-fuelled frenzy, or a Dark Side disaster?**

BRAND NEW NABOO

Just as *Battle For Naboo* on N64 offers players an original story set within the Episode 1 time-frame, *Starfighter*'s plot and characters are all sparkly brand-new too. To ensure full Episode 1 authenticity, the Trade Federation features heavily and your ultimate aim is to protect the Naboo system from its tyranny.

Each of the three new heroes introduced in *Starfighter* – Rhys, Vana and Nym – has his or her own personal vendetta against the Trade Federation and plenty of personal motives for wanting to atomise everything that moves. Rhys is a Naboo pilot in training, Vana is a femme fatale gun-for-hire type, and Nym is a grizzled alien hard-nut.

GIVE IT SOME STICK

As the three heroes' destinies draw together, you get to play each of them in turn, and their missions vary in both objectives and difficulty. The three ships at your disposal all handle very differently and you'll need to put in some serious time in training if you're going to be the next Luke Skywalker.

The game also uses a new control system, where in addition to primary and secondary fire, zoom, targeting and speed controls, you can now use the twin analogue sticks to pilot your craft to perfection. The left stick steers your craft while the right one controls roll and pitch, and it works brilliantly, giving you full and intuitive control over your ship.

WING IT, MAN

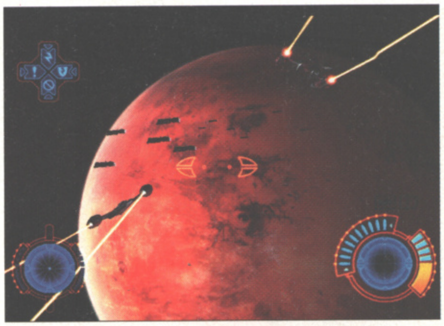
Another special addition to this PS2 blast-fest is the wingmen controls. On the top left of the game screen there is an icon that represents the D-Pad on your controller. Each of the four directions can be used to command other squadron members.

So if you are heading for an all-out offensive on a Federation drop-ship, you can instruct your buddies to cover your ass, or get them to go all-out on the enemy so you don't have to. *Starfighter*'s a little more strategic than previous Wars games, and all the better for it.

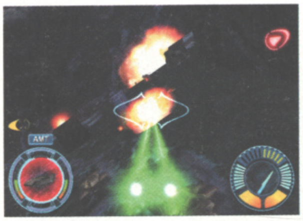
ALL YOU WANT

Playing *Starfighter* is a real joy. It's like every great Star Wars fantasy rolled into one big, tasty PS2 treat. You want to scream down canyons and ravines, blasting enemies into scrap? Or how about jaw-dropping space dog-fights with the odds stacked against you and literally hundreds of enemy craft hunting you down? It's all in *Starfighter*, and then some.

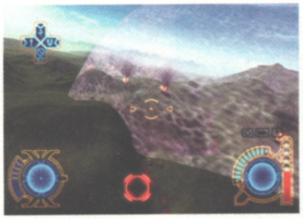
The graphics too are pretty gorgeous, but we noticed that the in-game textures aren't as detailed as we wanted from PS2 and sometimes look a little (no offence to the Big N) N64-esque. That said, you only notice it when there's not much going on in the game and *Starfighter*'s action is so frenetic these moments are few and far between.



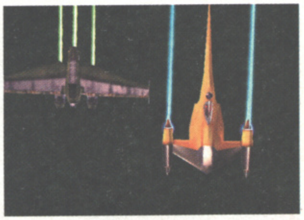
Take out freights for big booms. Coo, pretty red planet



Hug the cliff walls for surprise attacks



Forcefields must be disabled to win the day

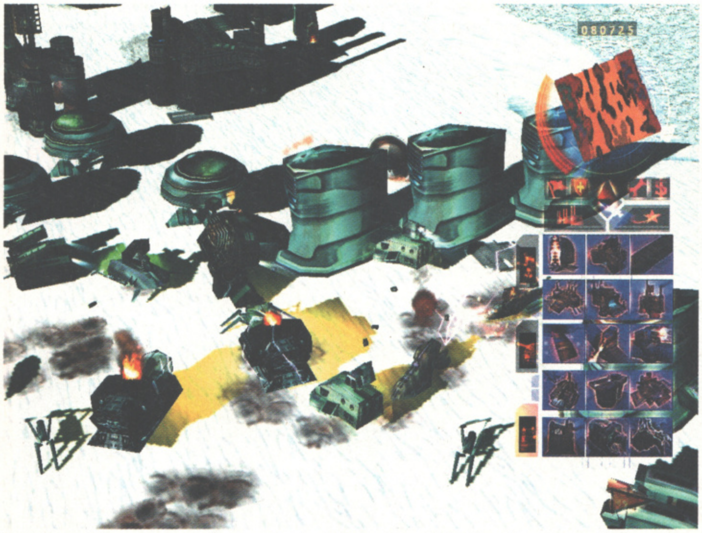


Formation flying. Swoop down and get him

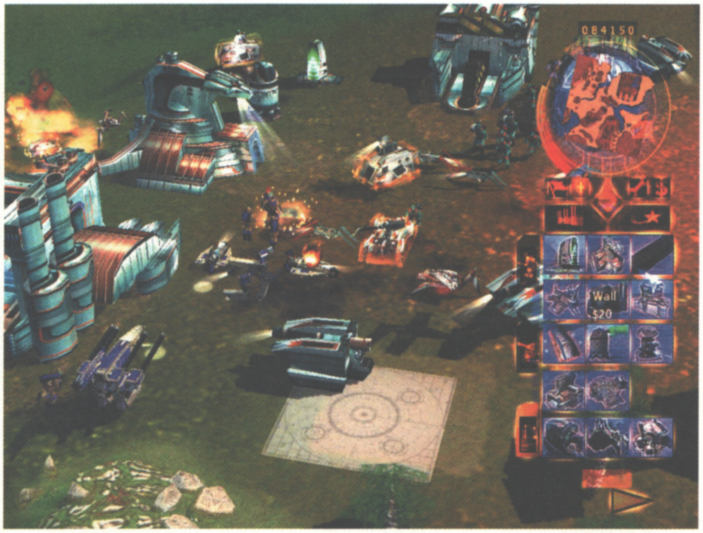
CVG RECKONS

More depth and variety than other Wars games plus an incredible atmosphere.

END



With three different homeworlds, terrain should be pretty varied and you'll get to view it from all angles using a zoom and rotate feature. Hopefully, it'll be more useful than *Force Commander*'s

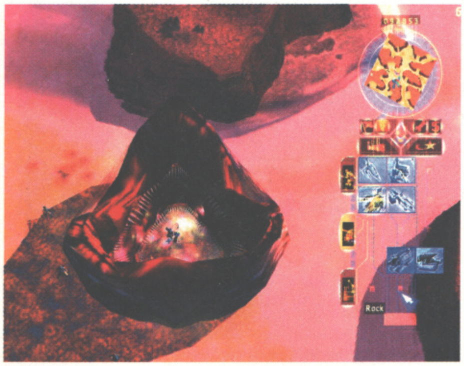


***Command & Conquer* veterans will have the familiar tab interface licked in seconds. Check out the value of that section of wall - $20. Good to see the Yankee buck is acceptable currency in sci-fi land**

THE WORMS RE-TURN

WORDS**PETER WALKER** SCREENSHOTS**WESTWOOD**

RTS ÜBER-DEVELOPERS FEED US TO THE WORMS 3D-STYLEE



Soldier1: "What a worm!". Soldier 2: "You shoulda seen the fish"

EMPEROR: BATTLE FOR DUNE

OUT**2001 TBC** FORMAT**PC**

Not your everyday way to die, getting swallowed whole by a worm the size of a small South American country. But it holds a special place in the hearts of anyone familiar with the universe of Dune. So any game set in the dark and twisted reality of the mystical spice simply *has* to feature death by worm, and *Emperor: Battle For Dune* certainly doesn't disappoint.

MUMMY, I'VE GOT WORMS

No longer content with ickle, weeny native neutrals you find bumbling around the RTS landscapes of the *C&C* universe, Westwood has made the Dune sandworms the colossal beasts they were meant to be in Frank Herbert's sci-fi novels: huge great mega-worms that can consume massive battle wagons and turd them out without even feeling the 20-inch thick armour-plating scraping their hairy bung-holes.

Oh, and just to complicate matters further, sandworms are attracted to the vibrations caused by fighting and by your heavy vehicles crossing the sand. Funnily enough, you'll be doing a lot of both in *Emperor*, so you'll need to try to build on rocky surfaces and avoid dunes as much as possible.

TRUE TO DUNE

All of which begins to tell us Westwood is trying damned hard to create its most convincing gaming environment and immersive strategy experience to date. And, just as the developer attempted to kick-start the real-time strategy genre with *Dune II* in 1992, it's using the *Dune* series once more to try something new (new for Westwood, at least).

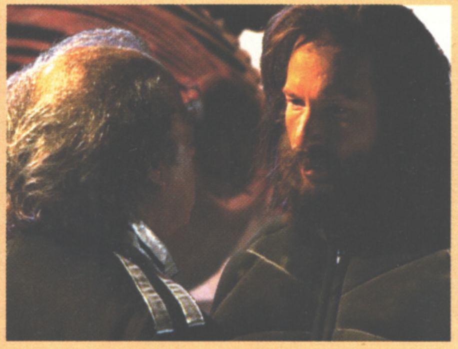
Sure, the battlefields have been drawn in beautiful '3D' and are using a line-of-sight feature, but then so did *Total Annihilation* years back. What we're talking about here is a new strategic command level that promises to send armchair generals' pulses sky high the world over.

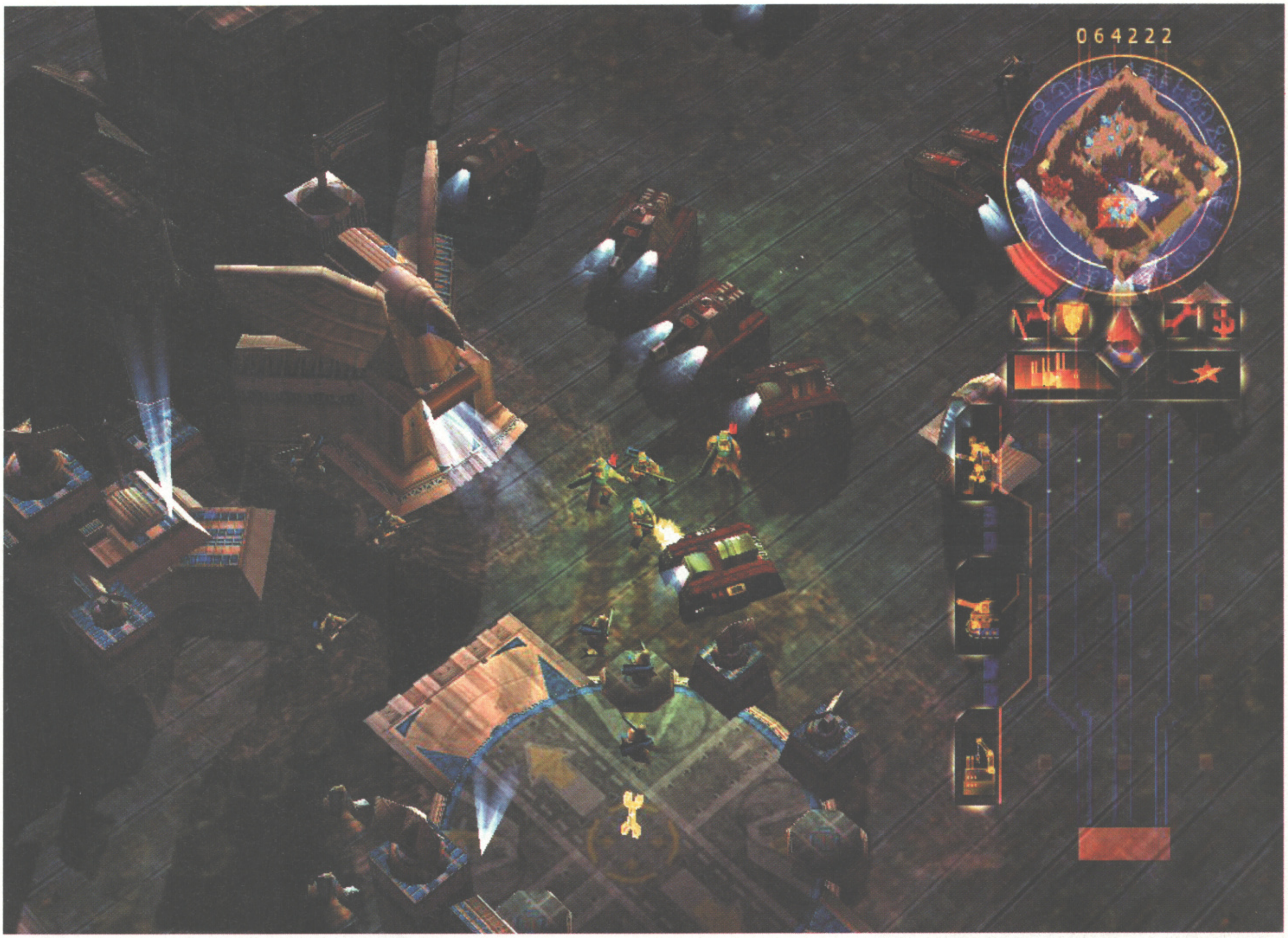
ALL(MOST) STAR CAST

As always, Westwood can't do an RTS without roping in a bunch of B, C and D List movie stars. This time out, it's the turn of Star Trek: The Next Generation's lovable Klingon, Warf (Michael Dorn), as Duke Achillus of House of Atreides.

Michael McShane, from Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves, is the baddass House of Harkonnen's Baron Rakan, while his advisor is played by Vincent Schiavelli, from Ghost. If you're thinking, "Who the hell...?", then that'd be about right.

The Hollywood boys and girls spent two weeks filming in the deserts around Las Vegas (what a bummer, eh?) and another week in studio. As McShane puts it, "The costuming and staging with this type of work borders on Shakespeare." Er, yeah right. But to be fair, though a little hammy, Westwood's FMVs are usually pretty good, giving you that bit of extra incentive to progress and see how the plot develops.

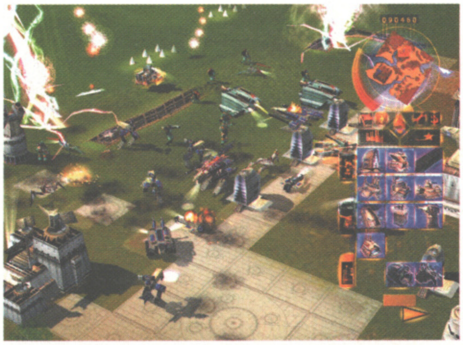




Remember the frustration of earlier Westwood RTSs where units got stuck or refused to walk across invisible parts of buildings? See the repair spanner icon? See the soldier by it... actually *on* the building?

ATTACK OR RETREAT?

Now you have to make decisions about which territories to invade, whether to fulfill all your mission objectives or retreat and if you should risk a counterattack elsewhere by calling in reinforcements from a conquered area. In short, it's the strategic layer Westwood's RTSs have been screaming out for.



Only gits who can afford kick-ass PCs get the full visual glory

From what we've played so far, *Emperor*'s well on the way to being a more dynamic strategy experience than what's gone before. Add the choice of not only having three sides to play as (the noble Atreides, the evil Harkonnen and the sneaky Ordos), but also having five sub-houses to ally with and you begin to see why there are 100 missions and 33 territories set across multiple home worlds.

If that doesn't sound good for replay value, then there's the usual skirmish mode for randomly generated battles, a co-op option for two of you to battle massed computer forces, as well as full online support from Westwood's reliable servers.

TACTICAL GALACTICAL

The relatively small number of units and structures per house (ten-14 and 12 buildings) mean sub-house alliances will also be very important on a tactical level, each allegiance adding a new building and two new units. Westwood reckons all this "makes the number of meaningful combinations very high, and we expect players to be arguing over favourite combinations".

The code we played was too early to tell if that will be true, but there's certainly some cool units in there, including Fremen soldiers that can summon and ride sandworms and the Contaminator, which turns enemies into biological monstrosities the like of which haven't been seen since the Brit Awards.

HARVEST THE SPICE, MELANGE

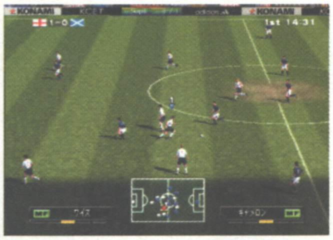
Graphically, *Emperor* is looking pretty tasty already, with diverse terrain and features unique to the three home worlds, and the AI's being tweaked for a more human-like CPU opponent. All the usual resource management of Westwood RTSs is in there too, with interface aids such as waypoints and unit shortcuts.

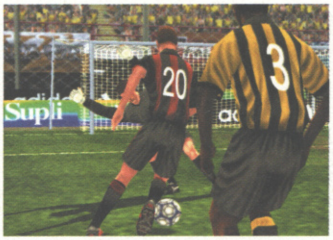
We've also seen a few nips and tucks too, like being able to lay out all your defensive walls at once for them to get built as you can afford it. That said, we've yet to see the switch to 3D do anything much to the core gameplay. But we'll reserve judgement 'til we get our hands on more complete code.

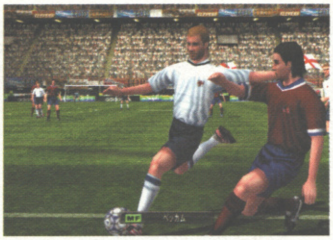
CVG RECKONS

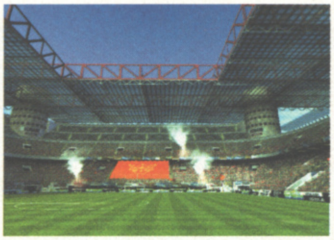
It might not revolutionise RTS, but it's by Westwood so it should shift like worm poop off a sandy shovel.

END


This angle gives a good view of the game


Close up, the players look totally awesome

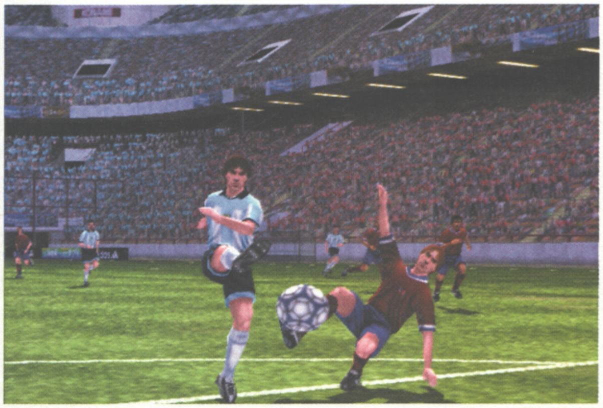

It looks more like Beckham in motion, honest

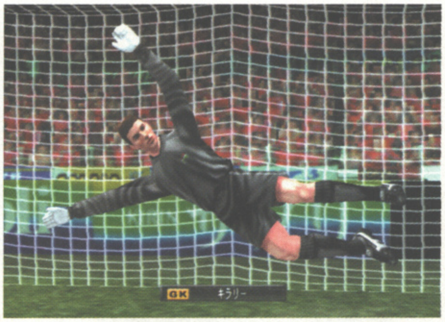

Could almost be Sky Sports footage. Almost

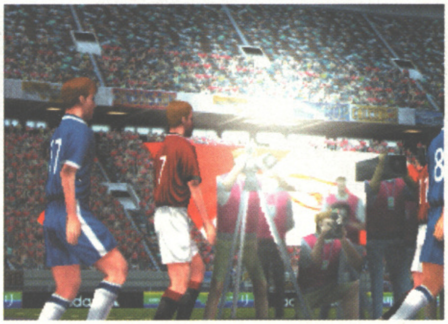
THE FANS' FAVOURITE

PS2 *ISS* THAT TRULY IS IN A LEAGUE OF ITS OWN

WORDS**SPLEEN SCOTT** SCREENSHOTS**KONAMI**


Watching the animations in the replays is enough to make a grown football game lover break down and cry that he hasn't got a Japanese PS2 to play this on


The keeper remembers he didn't lock his house while in mid-save


Chelsea and Man Utd get the star treatment before the game

WINNING ELEVEN 5

*OUT***MARCH (JAP), UK (OCTOBER)** *FORMAT***PS2**

Anyone with some money in their pockets, a love of football, a PSone and a fully-operational brain will be rushing out to the shops this month to pick up a copy of *ISS Evolution 2*. But while you're threading through balls on that PSone classic, Japanese footy-lovers will be playing the next in the series. It's called *Winning Eleven 5*, but we'll know it as *ISS Evo 3* come October. As it's potentially the finest sports videogame ever, we just had to check it out.

THE BEAUTIFUL GAME

Graphically, it's frighteningly good, but you've got to zoom right in with the camera to fully appreciate it. Fouled players tumble through the air with their arms flailing, and keepers stretch every sinew trying to keep the ball out of the net.

High-profile players such as Zidane and Beckham look exactly as they should, and the stadia are amazingly realistic. A weak crowd effect is the main downer, but you only notice it at set pieces.

HARDER, FASTER!

The core gameplay remains almost identical to the PSone *Evo* games, which will disappoint those hoping for a full-on next-gen rebuild, but will keep die-hards happy. New features include the ability to run at different speeds, pull out different feints and hit passes into space by nudging the right analogue stick.

The speed has been cranked up over *Evo 2*, and it's even harder to break the computer teams down. You can also now play friendlies with the club teams from Master League mode.

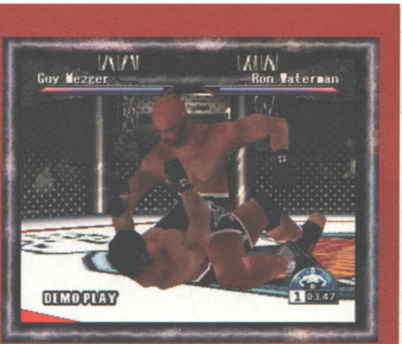
THE VIEW FROM THE TOUCHLINE

The high-res visuals give you a better view of the park, making *WE 5* the best multiplayer *ISS* yet. Players could be a bit more believable off the ball – pushing, raising their arms – but there's no doubt *WE 5* should be the best PS2 footy game out there. October may be a long time to wait for our version, but at least it gives Konami time to refine the game even more just for us.

CVG RECKONS

Set to be the best footy game money can buy. Worth checking out on import.

END


Guy Mezger
Ron Waterman
DEMO PLAY
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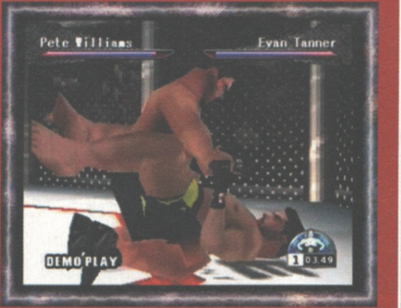
Pete Williams
Evan Tanner
DEMO PLAY
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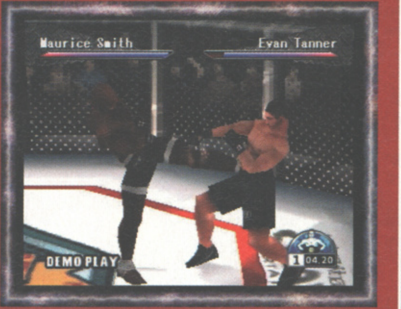
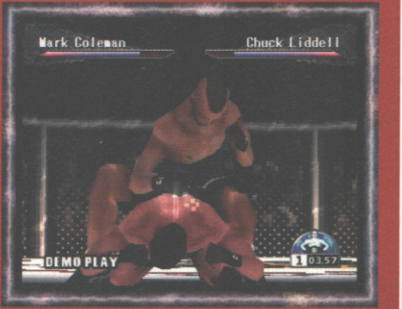

Maurice Smith
Evan Tanner
DEMO PLAY
1 04.20


Mark Coleman
Chuck Liddell
DEMO PLAY
1 03.57

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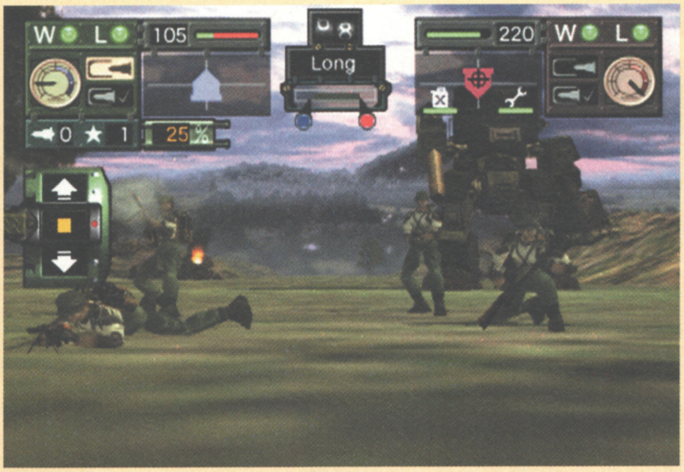
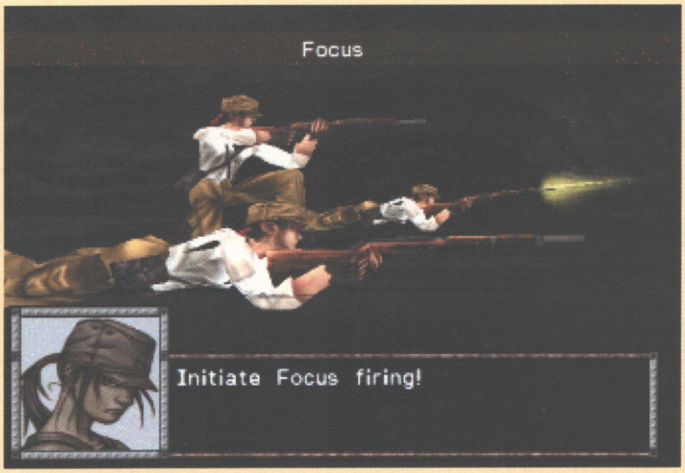
GOTTA KILL 'EM ALL

KONAMI UNLEASHES THE GAME WITH MORE STYLES THAN VIDAL SASSOON

WORDS & SCREENSHOTS
LES ELLIS



The battles are an impressive sight with a whole range of landscapes to wreak havoc over


Focus

Initiate Focus firing!

Private Jones was gutted to find himself posted to the 3rd Regiment's Page 3 Girls detachment

RING OF RED

OUT ***MAY/JUNE*** *FORMAT* ***PS2***

Machines have come a long way in such a short time. Wasn't long ago we barely trusted them to make the tea. Now look – we're relying on them to win wars for us. If you're the kind of person who likes all your games to fall into nice little categories, try this on for size. *Ring of Red* is a real-time, turn-based, RPG, action, shoot 'em up, strategy game. No, seriously.

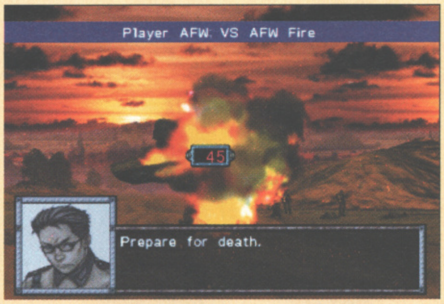
It doesn't start well. The first half-hour or so feels like getting a lecture from your mum. The words just go on and on and your only wish is that it would shut the hell up. Then the action starts and you can do practically nothing except press fire. At this point you'd be forgiven for thinking this is rubbish. But you'd be wrong. Get past the first few missions and you discover what could be one of the finest PS2 Mech strategy games of the next year or two.

W L
75
Medium
203
W L
0 ★ 2
38%

STEAMY FUN

Set just after World War Two, *RoR* features steam-powered Mechs battling for supremacy in a war between north and south Japan. That's the real-time element. The turn-based stuff comes in when you move your Mechs around the maps trying to intercept the enemy and take over key towns to get extra troops.

What's next? Ah, RPG. Well you have to interact with the other characters in the game plus manage the Mechs' stats in the battles. Action? Huge guns, missiles and other weapons blasting things into smithereens – that constitutes action. Shoot 'em up? Ditto. Strategy – you have to figure out which Mechs to send after which opponent and deploy your troops in battle to their best effect. There you go, all genre bases covered.


Player AFW VS AFW Fire

Prepare for death.

It hurts to have one's life snuffed out by a speccy geek

MECH WARRIOR TACTICS

Final Fantasy and *Fallout* have both taken dedicated RPG games and made a sub-genre by unleashing *Tactics* editions, and *RoR* kind of does the same thing for more traditional Mech battling games like *Mech Warrior* and *Armoured Core*.

But neither these new strategy elements or the old school blasting completely dominate, making *RoR* a rare beast – a mixed genre game with real depth and playability. And anyway, if none of the genres appeal, simply watching those troops getting slaughtered in close-up detail is a laugh for a while.

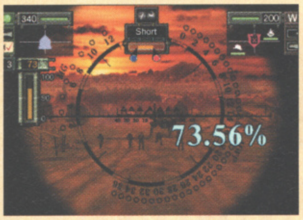
SUPERMODEL SEXY

So if you want your games to look sweeter than a supermodel squeezed into a pair of hotpants but with more depth, then Konami may have something up its sleeve that will suit you perfectly until *MGS2* comes out.

A real mish-mash of genres with some amazing visuals that (at last) start to show off what the PS2 is capable of. We definitely wanna see more of this one.

W L
350
Medium
240
W L
0 ★ 0
53%

Man vs Mech. Know who our money's on



Zoom right in to hit enemy weak spots

Quick Fire

Enemy AFW hit and severely damaged.

Knackering enemy Mechs feels mighty fine

CVG RECKONS

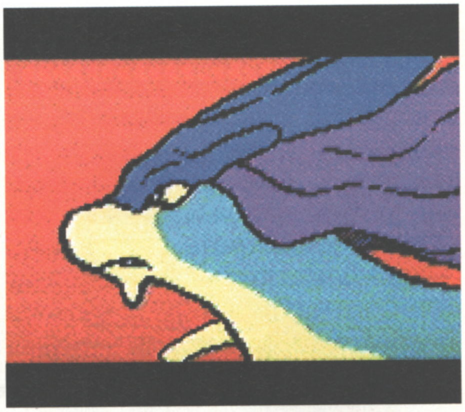
Mixing genres usually fails miserably – but the recipe is looking good here.

END

MOBILE POKEMANIA

POKEMON BY MOBILE PHONE? NOW THERE'S NO EXCUSE FOR NOT PLAYING *POKEMON*, WHEREVER YOU ARE

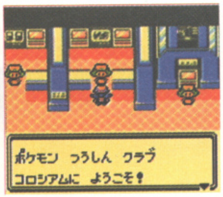
WORDS & SCREENSHOTS **LEE SKITTRELL**



POKEMON CRYSTAL

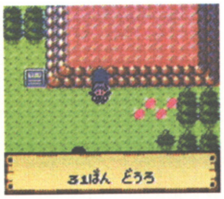
OUT **OCTOBER** FORMAT **GBC**

You can never have too much of a good thing, right? Well, after five Game Boy adventures, *Pokémon Pinball*, the *Trading Card Game*, two N64 games, two movies, endless re-runs of the cartoon show and merchandise galore, *Pokémon* is surely pushing everyone's patience to the limit. And now, before *Gold* and *Silver* even go on sale in the UK, yet another adventure has been announced. Before you lose control in a fit of Pikachu-induced rage though, you should know that *Pokémon Crystal* looks like it'll be one of the most revolutionary GB titles ever, and absolutely essential to Pokénuts everywhere.



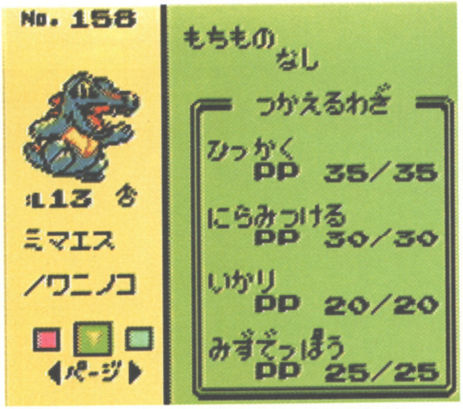
ポケモン つうしん クラブ
コロシアムに ようこそ！

Hmm, language barrier hell...

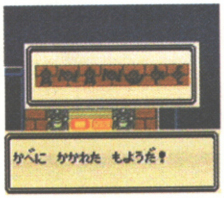


31ばん どうろ

...will be sorted for UK release

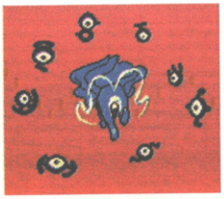


Pokémon are now animated on the stats screen as well as in battles. Watch as Totodile boogies on down in the top left corner



かべに かかれた もようだ！

This is all new for *Crystal*. The Unowns are far more important



Suicune turns tail but those mysterious Unowns give chase

CELLPHONE SURPRISE!

Crystal is a special edition of *Gold* & *Silver* with the best feature being that you can hook your GBC up to Nintendo's mobile phone adapter and trade Pokémon over the airwaves.

As well as calling friends to help you complete your Pokédex, you'll be downloading super-rare critters like Mew and Celebi. The network is up and running in Japan and Nintendo techno-wizards are hard at work to include this feature for the UK release.

SUPER SUICUNE SECRETS

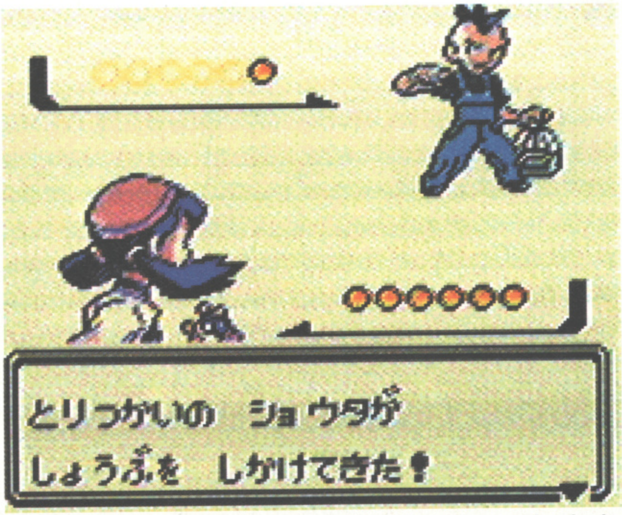
There are also subtle changes to the *Gold* & *Silver* story in *Crystal*. Our Japanese is a bit rusty but we can say those mysterious Unowns play a bigger part in the adventure, and there's a brand new baddie called Minaki. This guy is trying to get his slimy hands on the beautiful legendary dog, Suicune, and you have to stop him.

There are graphical improvements too. It's got more colour (you'll have to have a GBC for this one) and there are nice animations when you encounter a beast in the wild.

GO GIRLY, GO

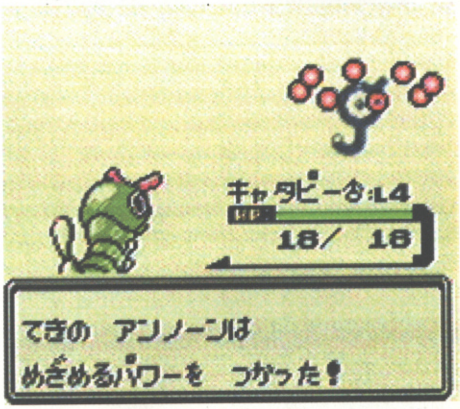
The world of *Pokémon* can no longer be accused of being sexist, as *Crystal* lets you play as either a girl or boy trainer. This new Pokéhoney is yet to be named for the Western games, but from her lab coat and moody look you can tell she won't give up until she's the ultimate trainer. We love her bunchies.

We were disappointed by *Yellow* as it didn't have enough extras to make it worthwhile if you owned either *Red* or *Blue*. This, on the other hand, has got us very excited. If the Big N can sort out the mobile network for UK players, you'll see the entire CVG team – and Pokémaniacs everywhere – weeping tears of unadulterated joy.



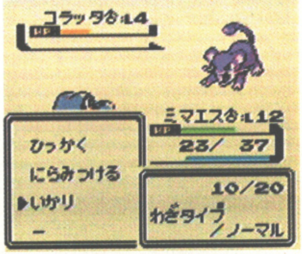
とりつかいの ショウタが
しょうぶを しかけてきた！

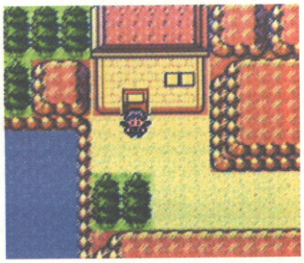
If you ever wanted to be a girl, now's your chance. *Crystal* lets you play as a male or female



てきの アンノーンは
めざめるパワーを つかった！

You can't tell from our screenshots, but battle animations are better





CVG RECKONS

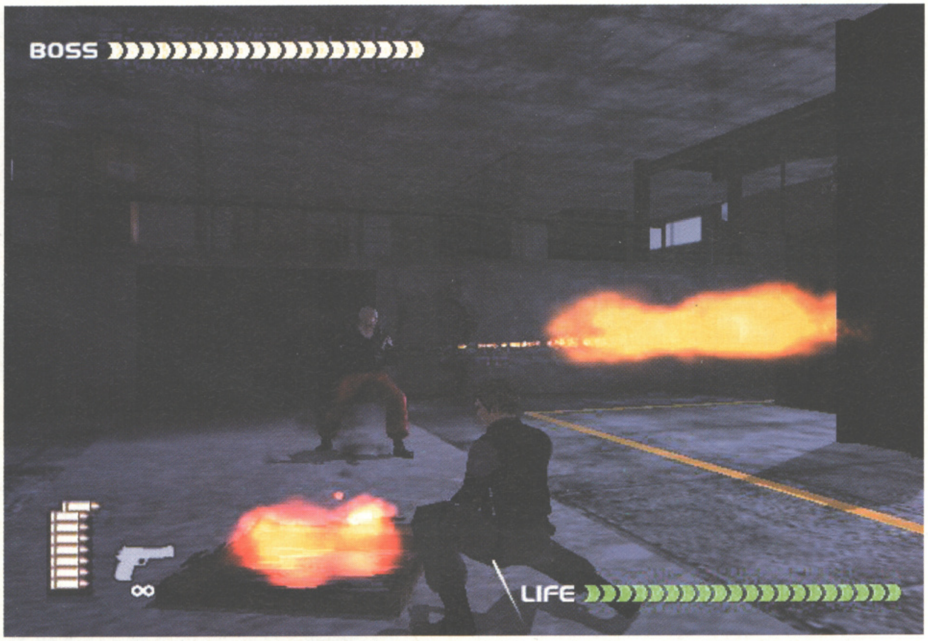
This could be THE must-have game for next Chrimbo.

END

METAL GEAR 1.5?

METAL GEAR COPYCAT THAT'S NOT QUITE PURRRFECT

WORDS & SCREENSHOTS **LES ELLIS**



After a bad day at the office there's nothing like shooting the boss – but this one will retire you sharpish if you're not careful

OPERATION WINBACK

OUT **LATE APRIL** *FORMAT* **PS2**

If you're thinking this looks like it wants to be *Metal Gear Solid 2*, then you're about right. But this is more like a cheesy Xmas Number One to *MGS*'s Marilyn Manson. It lacks the glamour and is a bit annoying, but you just know it's gonna be popular because it'll be out at the right time. If you're drooling at the prospect of *MGS2* but can't wait until next year, then you may be tempted by this imitation.

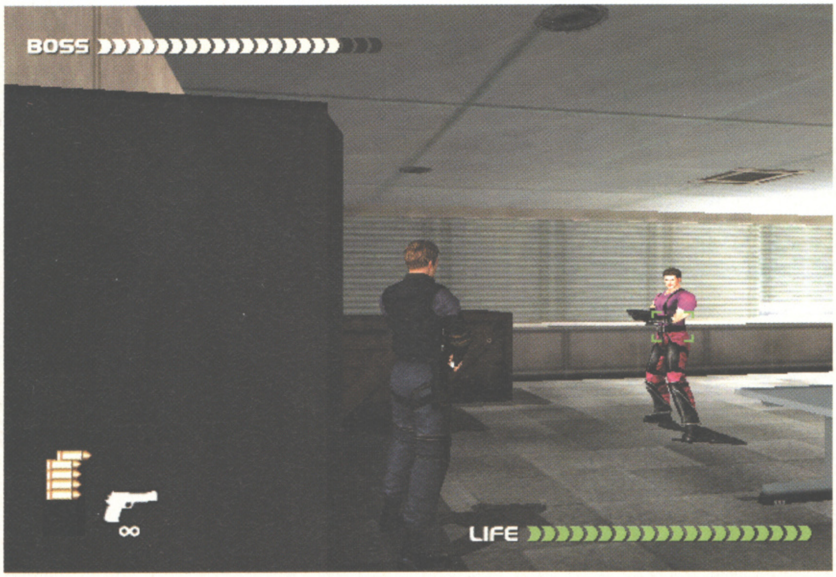
A WEALTH OF STEALTH

The comparisons are understandable. Every step you take needs careful planning to make sure no enemy guards hear or see you, and you'll need to figure their patrol routes and how to take them down with minimal pain. You creep around hiding behind crates and using walls as cover. Sound familiar?

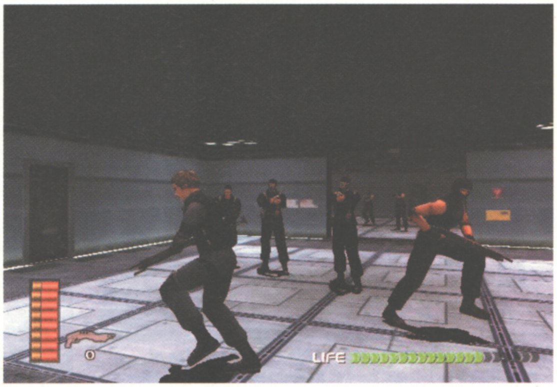
But obvious similarities apart, there's plenty here to set this apart from *MGS2*. For one, it looks like there will be plenty more pure high-speed action sequences both indoors and out as you duck in and out of cover to get across the open ground. Throw in some huge levels to explore and a small army of terrorists to blow away and you are looking at an action-packed adventure.

MULTIPLAYER MAYHEM

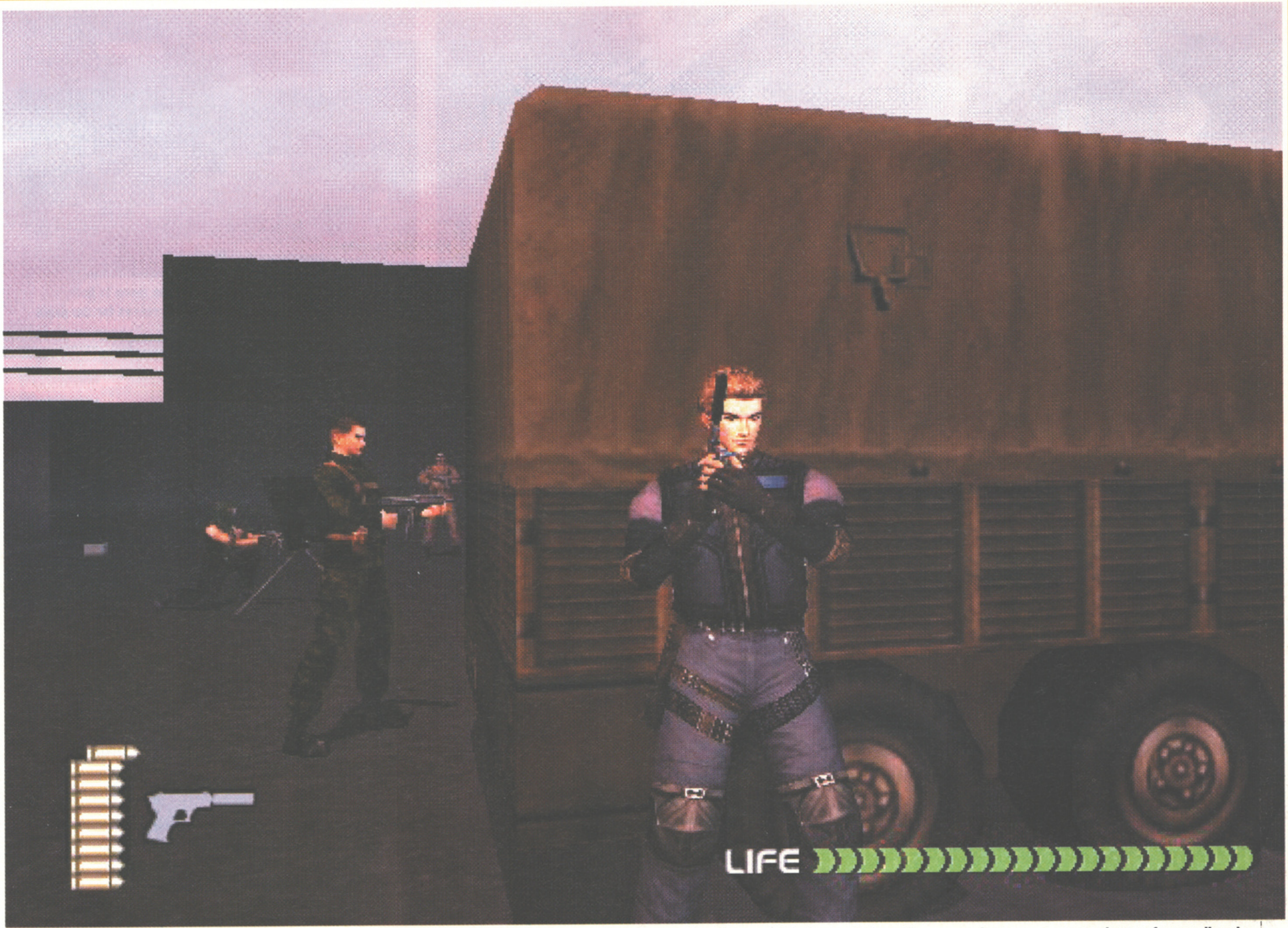
The multiplayer mode (something *MGS2* won't have) needs a lot of tarting up, and though it is a welcome effort, in the code we played it doesn't feel much like a deathmatch right now. There are other multiplayer options to try out though, including the chance of adding up to eight bots to a match. While it doesn't look set to be a threat to *Unreal Tournament*, it does promise some mate-mauling longevity.



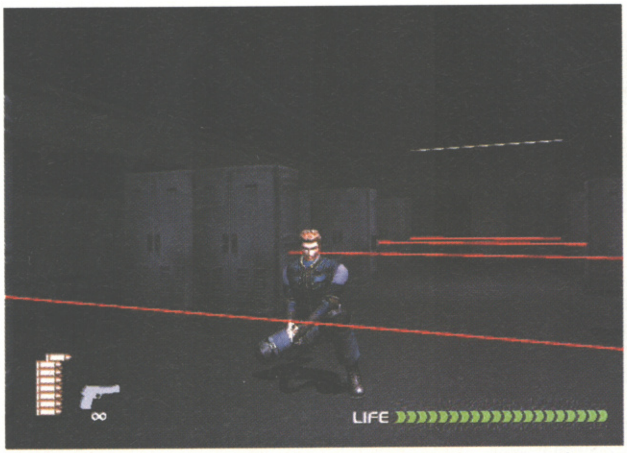
The auto target selects your man, then all you have to do is pull the trigger. Not exactly rocket science, but the way you have to use cover and stealthy tactics to get anywhere makes for top-notch action movie-style firefights



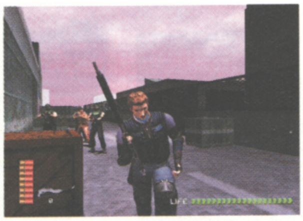
A shotgun's good at close-quarters, but you could probably do with a nuke here



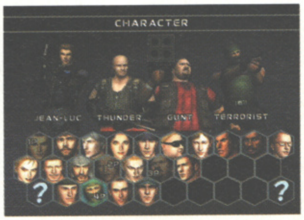
This game of hide-and-seek will end in tears if you can't whack these three guys quickly. One of them's got a bleedin' great tripod-mounted machine gun against your poxy pea shooter, for gawd's sake



There are puzzles and traps aplenty in these high-tech facilities. Take these security lasers for example. They'll cut you in half if you don't figure out how to deactivate them



But if all else fails... run like hell



Plenty o' multiplayer characters to choose

SHOT IN THE ARM

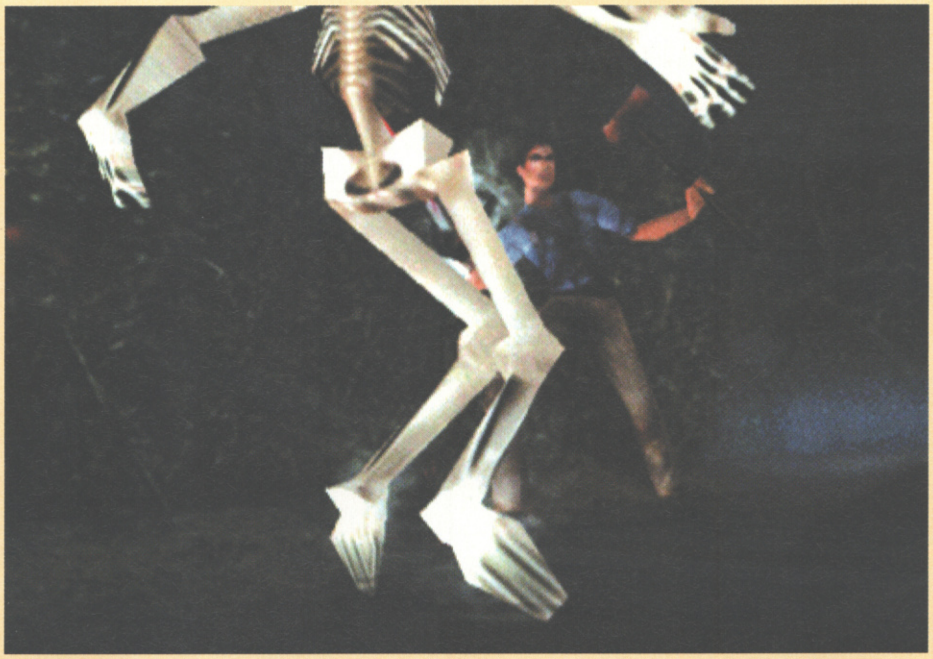
There are some glaring flaws that need sorting. Often, the camera angle won't let you see oncoming enemies, meaning you get spotted through no fault of your own. And at times the fogging is a little drastic. But if these get fixed, *Winback* is showing enough promise at this stage that maybe Koei will have a surprise hit on its hands this summer.

The PS2 badly needs a boost to its game line-up, something a bit different. This may be just an N64 game that has had a makeover, but then most current PS2 games are just brushed up PSone games, so why let that put you off?

CVG RECKONS

They say imitation is the sincerest form of flattery – and this is doing a good impression of MGS2.

END



Hacking various ghouls and skeletons to pieces is a whole lot of fun for a while, but the damn things just don't stop appearing

If you were into the films, you'll be over the moon to hear that good old Bruce Campbell has done the voiceovers for the game

It's fair to say that this residence is very evil

BRING OUT YOUR DEAD

NEXT-GEN SHOCKING HORROR OR JUST PLAIN SHOCKING?

WORDS & SCREENSHOTS **LES ELLIS**

EVIL DEAD: HAIL TO THE KING

OUT ***APRIL*** *FORMAT* ***DC***

Groovy! Based on three of the best cult horror movies of all time and with a guest appearance by the star, how could the game version of Evil Dead fail? Set eight years after the last movie, with Ash and girlfriend returning to the cabin in the woods, it takes about eight seconds for the gore to start splashing as you come under attack from hellish demons spawned by a reading of the Necronomicon – the Book of the Dead.

GRAVE MISTAKE

Anyone expecting a *Resident Evil*-style spine-chiller could be disappointed. The emphasis here is on action rather than plot-building and tension. This won't make you jump like those classic scenes in the *Res* games did. Sure, you're still running around locations finding items, but rather than the pre-scripted incidents of *Res*, zombies and demons appear at any time. Even after you've cleared a room a load more can just pop up. More exciting or plain annoying? We know which our money is on.

ASHES TO ASHES

Publisher THQ has told us changes are being made to this version (the finished US release) for the UK game. Thank God, because those cameras make for some very frustrating gaming, while endlessly respawning of monsters soon become a chore. And to be honest, right now the whole experience isn't half as exciting as horror games that have gone before. It hardly lives up to the potential of the *Evil Dead* licence. Like THQ says, it's changing bits – but will it change enough?

MAKE YOUR EYES BLEED

With lush background visuals where there's always something going on and some cool FMV sequences, it's not like this doesn't look the business. *Code: Veronica* shows that the DC can handle some top-notch gameplay – so come on boys, there's no excuse for failing to get this spot-on.

The locations and atmosphere are nicely reminiscent of the grimy movie sets

Ceaseless and random hack and slash is not the way forward in videogaming

Everybody now, "Behind you!"

CVG RECKONS

Needs work to avoid being dead by dawn. A work of evil genius – or just evil?

END

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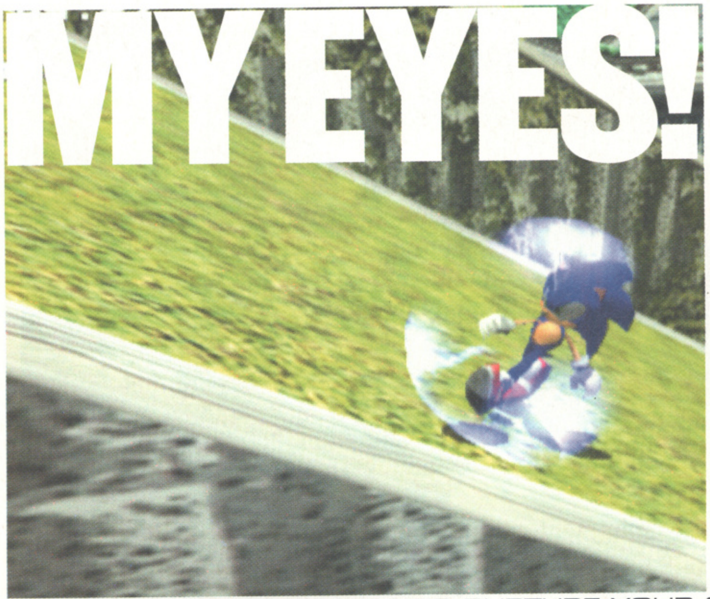
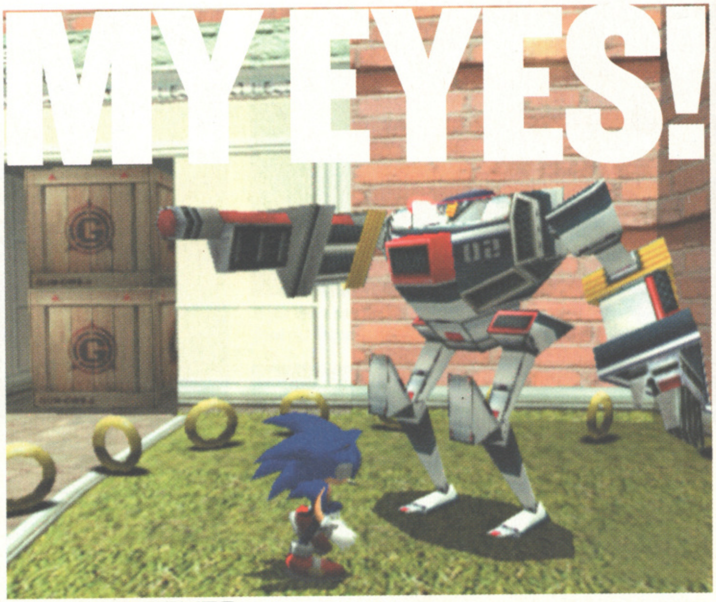
MY EYES! MY EYES!





MORE LIGHTSPEED ANTICS TO RUPTURE YOUR OPTICAL NERVES

WORDS & SCREENSHOTS **LEE SKITTRELL**

SONIC ADVENTURE 2

OUT **LATE 2001** FORMAT **DC**

Hands up who loved the original *Sonic Adventure* when it launched? And out of those with their palms in the air, how many thought that while the game was a wicked showcase for the DC's capabilities, the action was a bit shallow, and the RPG elements a bit simple?

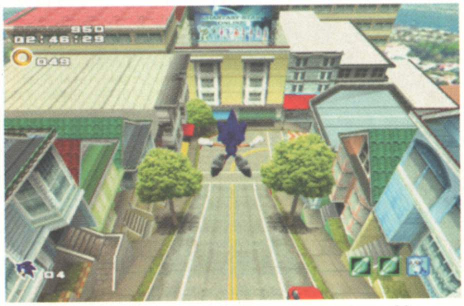
How good Sonic's next-gen debut was is still something we at CVG can't agree on, and after playing the sequel, we've got the same problem. The mind-blowing graphics, big action set-pieces and incredible speed score *SA2* big points. But that feeling of not quite being in control as the blue fella balls about at the speed of light and those troubling 'hands-free' sections return to haunt us.

'FRISCO FROLLICKS

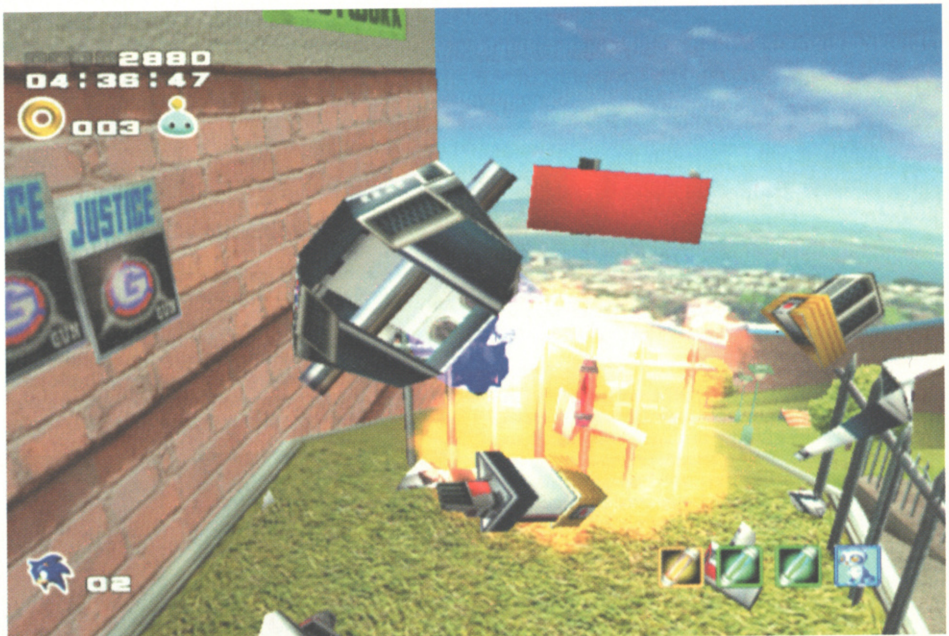
Though we're unsure of the plot, we do know there will be much less of the Aztec-style mysticism of the first game and a more metropolitan feel to the fun. The development team has even been moved from Japan to San Francisco to soak up the urban environment. And from what we've played so far, the Sonic Team bods appear to have that street vibe sorted, man.

SONIC BOOM

Sonic will get up to even more mad stuff in *SA2*, including 'boarding down car-packed streets, grinding along rails, swinging monkey-style on parallel bars and soaring through the air assisted by springboards. Of course, it all looks beautiful and Sonic is even better animated than before. The level layout looks to be similar to the first game too, rewarding both high-speed races to the goal point, as well as more leisurely explorations of each zone's secrets.



1000mph chases around city streets should prove plenty of fun



There's no doubt it all looks bleedin' marvellous, but we reckon *Sonic* needs a bit more of a 'hands-on' feel to the gameplay this time around

PLEASE PLEASE US

We'll have to see more finished code to tell if *SA2* will prove to be a more balanced – and dare we say more interactive – experience than its predecessor. The on-rails sections were passable in the original because we all wanted to see what DC could do. Now we all know, the impact of these sections in the sequel (like when a monster truck chases Sonic through the streets) could be dulled a little. But if the gameplay can match the flashy visuals this time round, maybe we'll all agree on the hog's greatness.

CVG RECKONS

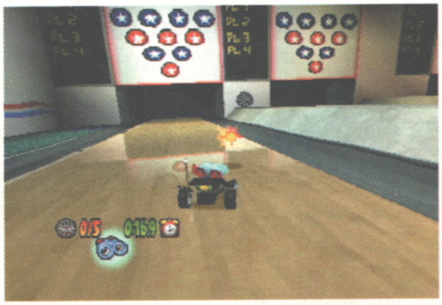
Painfully fast and potentially the Last Hurrah for DC when released later this year. Make it great boys...

END

MAKE TRACKS WITH THE TOYS

NOT A VERSION OF THE DISMAL DC *TOY RACER*. BIG RELIEF!

WORDS**LEE SKITTRELL** SCREENSHOTS**ACTIVISION**



The courses get pretty mad and take all kinds of twists and turns

TOY STORY RACER

OUT**APRIL** FORMAT**PS**

If the world of games was a cooked turkey it would be stuffed to bursting with cartoon kart racers. You couldn't count them on a centipede's feet. So any new cutesie kart 'em up really needs something special to stand out. Even a big-name licence such as Disney doesn't always guarantee success, as last year's disappointing *Disneyworld Magical Racing Tour* proved. So it was with taste buds of trepidation that we heaved a forkful of *Toy Story Racer* into our eager gobs. Will it prove to be a sage and onion surprise or a gristle-filled sausage meat shocker?

RACE AND BATTLE

TSR is certainly a well-presented racer. Authentic Toy Story speech samples pepper the action and environments from the movies, such as Andy's house and Pizza Planet, are nicely recreated in all their comic splendour. The end effect is pretty special for a PSone game.

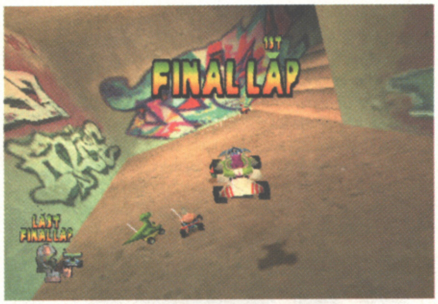
There are loads of playing styles too, from head-to-head challenges, straight races and some top battle modes. One of the game's few original twists is that when you play through the Championship mode, challenges differ from level to level. So you can be racing for pole position one minute, and trying to be the last toy standing in an all-out battle the next.

GOOD FOR TWO

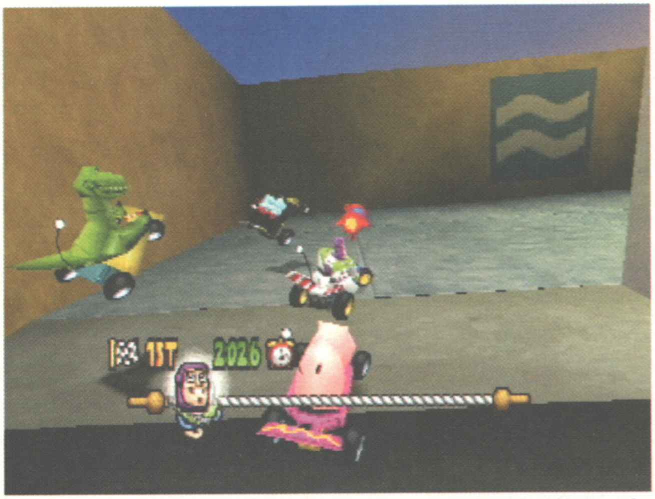
The racing action on offer in *TSR* is way above average and, while derivative, looks like it'll offer plenty of thrills for both one and two players. There are the usual power-ups galore, sneaky shortcuts and plenty of variety to keep solo players busy. But it's the mutiplayer game that really stands out as one of the more frantic ways to have fun with a mate that we've come across recently.

COURSE CONFUSION

Our main criticism of *TSR* is that currently the courses are too convoluted and too clever for their own good. The game is so fast that it's too easy to miss the few signposts that appear to point you in the right direction, leaving you floundering around chair legs and mud pools. This is something, however, that we are assured is being tweaked for release. Here's hoping.



You'll recognise locations from the movies as you tear around



As with all kart racers, the acid test is found in the Multiplayer mode. As bright and breezy as it may look fullscreen, it's quite how manic and downright fun the split-screen action is that counts

CVG RECKONS

You might be thinking the PlayStation needs another karter like it needs a price increase, but this is looking a real hoot, with a top-notch Disney licence to boot.

END

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THIS IS HARDCORE

FALLOUT JUST GOT REAL (TIME)

WORDS **PETER WALKER** SCREENSHOTS **INTERPLAY**

FALLOUT TACTICS

OUT **MARCH** FORMAT **PC**

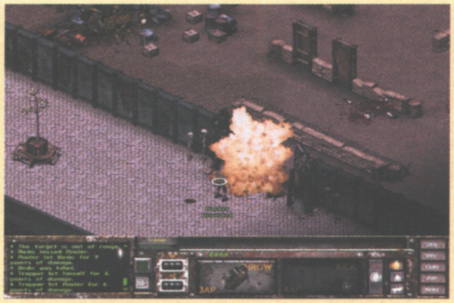
With all this next-gen excitement going about, CVG has decided to design our own über-console, the X-Station. It has a CPU with an Oxford degree in being clever, only plays multiplayer games and boasts 10 million controller ports (one per polygon on screen) so no-one can see how crap it is in split-screen.

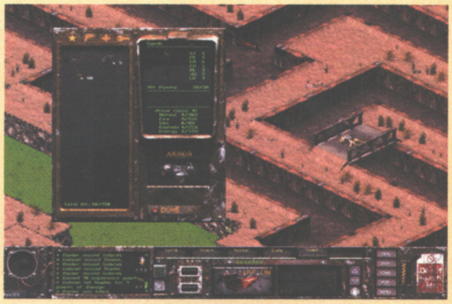
If that all sounds like a pointless waste of effort on our part, it's no more so than trying to second guess what new gameplay might turn up in the latest instalment of your favourite videogame series, be it *Final Fantasy* or *Fallout*. Take this offshoot of the cult, post-apocalyptic PC adventure series *Fallout*. Once upon a time the games were sprawling RPGs giving you the opportunity to roam the wastelands of a radiated USA completing quests and fighting scavengers in turn-based battles. But now they've ditched the more free-form structure of *Fallout 2* in favour of 20 combat-oriented missions – in *real-time*.

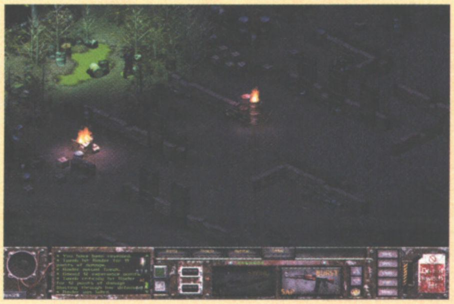
MUTATION NATION

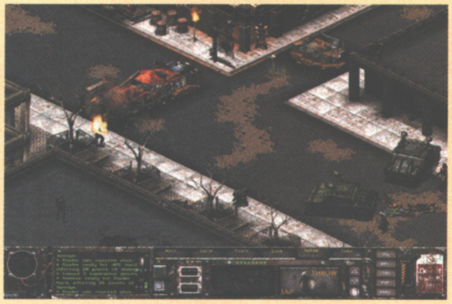
Sure, there's still a turn-based option and plenty of stat-crunching, skill-enhancing and levelling-up, but real-time has turned *FT* into a different gaming beast that potentially has far wider appeal. Imagine bits of *XCOM*, *Commandos*, *Syndicate* and *Baldur's Gate* mutated into one, big action-strategy game with more than a little depth.

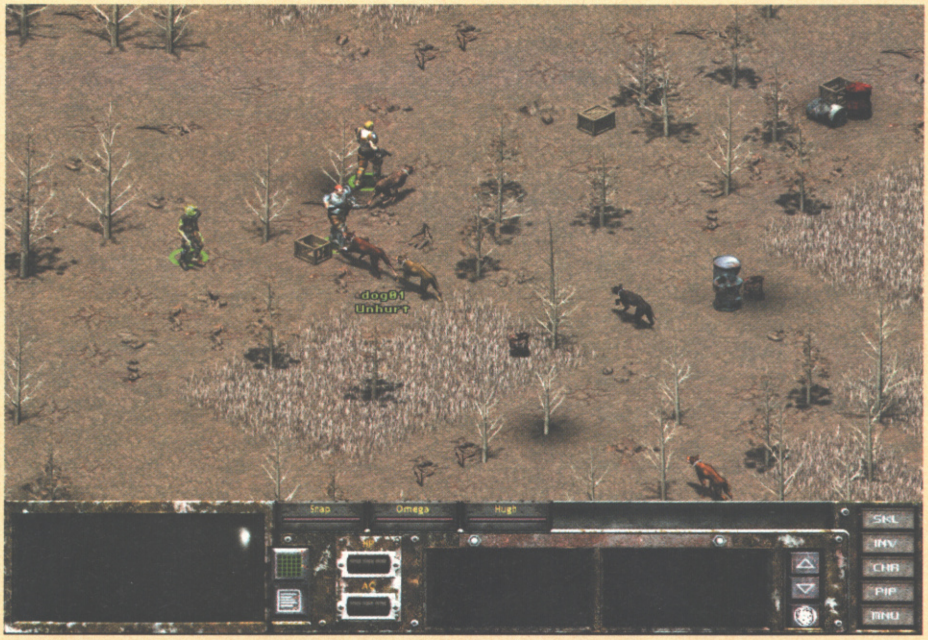
Though *Fallout* veterans should feel at home, the gameplay puts the 'hard' back into 'hardcore', even in Normal mode. If you've played a squad-based game such as *Commandos*, you'll blunder into the first mission with false confidence. Should you crawl up behind that guard and knife him, or force him into cover 'til you can lay down a crossfire? But hang on, where did that raider appear from? Around the same time you realise there's a line-of-sight feature, your squad is toast.


Anti-radiation suits also seal in air-biscuits. Don't strike a match


There are heaps of interactive objects and 115 weapons


Real-time night and day lighting affects spotting ranges


Later on you get to drive these Mad Max cast-offs around



Who let the dogs out? These pooches don't look like much of a threat but their bite is worse than their bark. Down boy

GIMME MY FALLOUT FIX

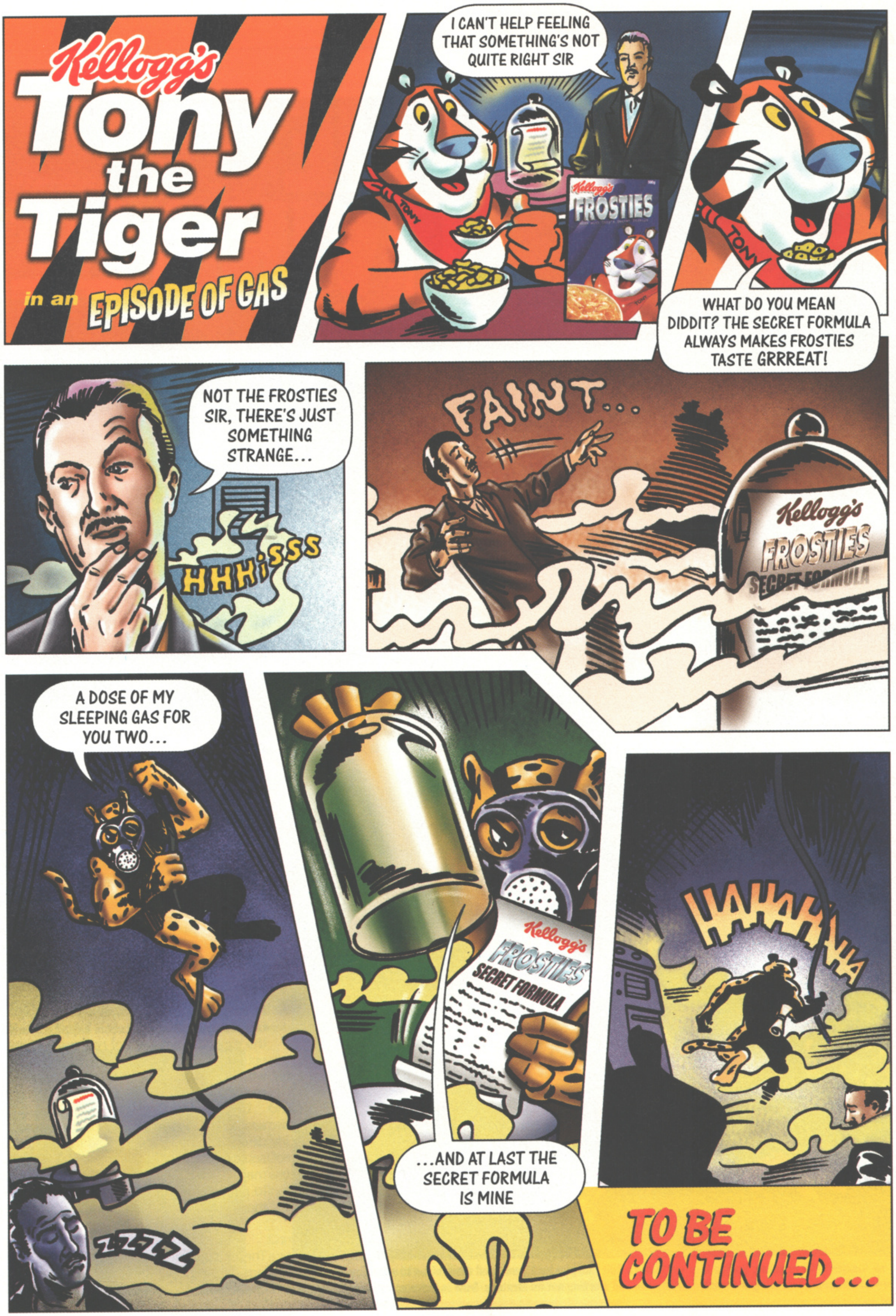
From what we've seen, it's pretty damn addictive and before long you're hooked, feeling your way through the mission environments discovering how everything works. You start understanding how enemies react to noise, which weapons work best in different situations and at different ranges, learning the hard way that you have to hug the walls when sneaking and finding out that guys lying down have a much better chance of surviving a firefight than those just crouching. So many factors need taking into account in deploying your team for the best tactical advantage that at first your brain will throb.

But in true RPG style, kills help you level-up and further customise squad members' attributes and skills – essential for tailor-making the right team for the next mission. Finally, when you reckon you're hard enough, you can take your team online against up to 18 other players, which we've not yet tried but could well turn out to be *FT*'s strongest side.

CVG RECKONS

Pathfinding and balancing issues still need work, but this should rock.

END


Kellogg's
Tony the Tiger
in an EPISODE OF GAS
I CAN'T HELP FEELING THAT SOMETHING'S NOT QUITE RIGHT SIR
Kellogg's FROSTIES
TONY
WHAT DO YOU MEAN DIDDIT? THE SECRET FORMULA ALWAYS MAKES FROSTIES TASTE GRRREAT!
NOT THE FROSTIES SIR, THERE'S JUST SOMETHING STRANGE...
HHHiSSS
FAINT...
Kellogg's FROSTIES SECRET FORMULA
A DOSE OF MY SLEEPING GAS FOR YOU TWO...
ZZZZ
Kellogg's FROSTIES SECRET FORMULA
...AND AT LAST THE SECRET FORMULA IS MINE
HAHAHAHA
TO BE CONTINUED...

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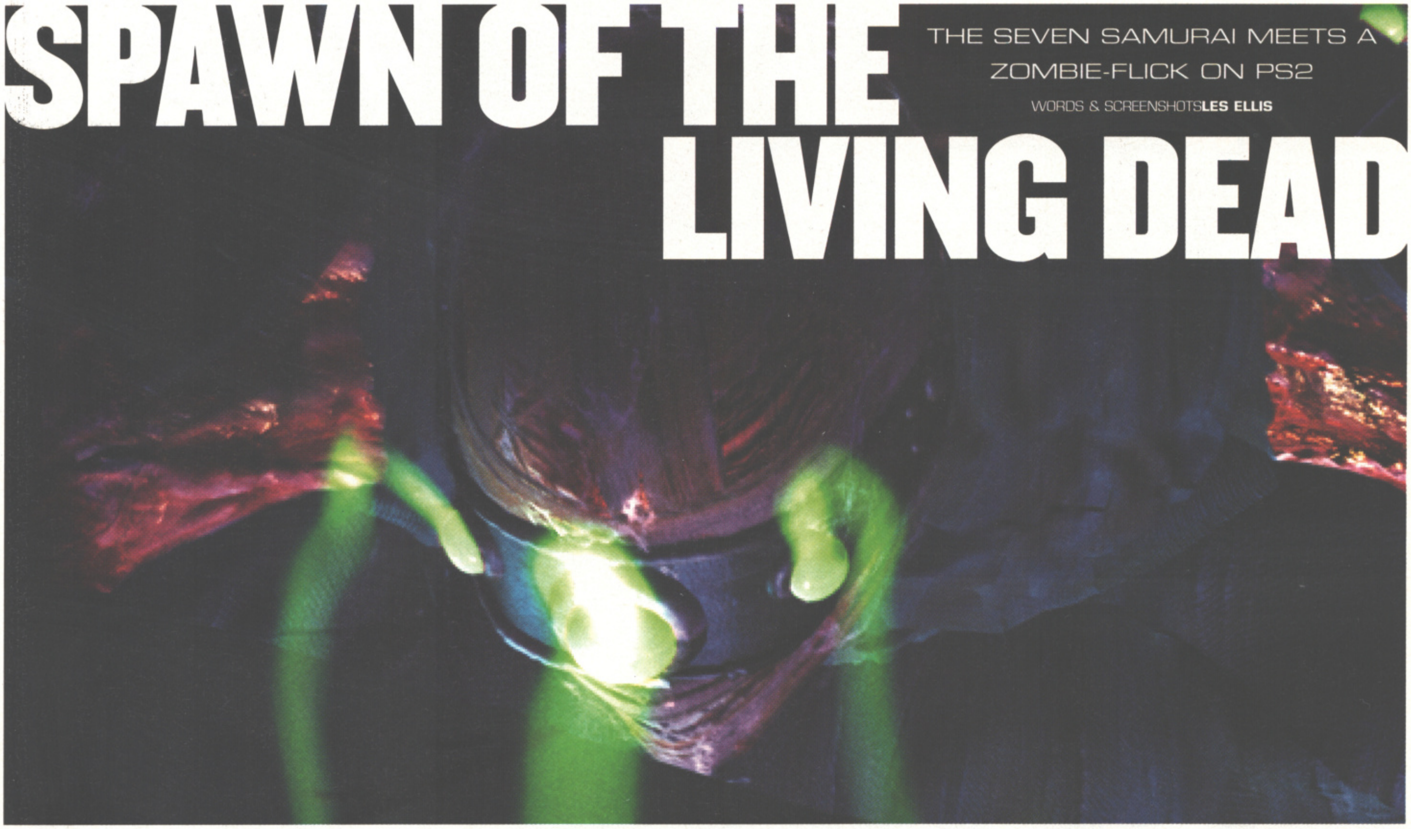
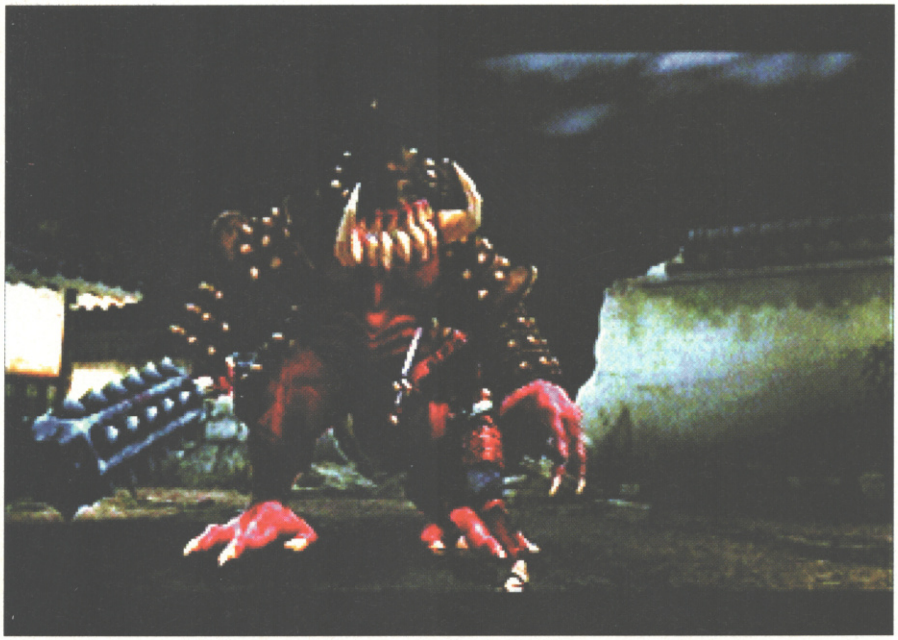
SPAWN OF THE LIVING DEAD

THE SEVEN SAMURAI MEETS A ZOMBIE-FLICK ON PS2

WORDS & SCREENSHOTS **LES ELLIS**



Onimusha means Demon Warrior in Japanese and this not-so-friendly looking fella is the guy from the title. Needless to say, he's hard as nails and has got more henchmen than you've got hairs on your head



Quite what this is, we wouldn't like to guess. Suffice it to say that it's 20ft tall, pink as a pansy and determined to wear your guts on its tusks for decoration. Killing the foul thing is a matter of patience and working out its strategy. Rush in there and you're dead meat

ONIMUSHA

OUT **2001 TBC** FORMAT **PS2**

Ever since news of the PS2 snuck out of Sony's HQ, Capcom has been showing us tantalising glimpses of this drop-dead-gorgeous survival horror epic. We saw the jaw-dropping graphics many months ago and we've recently seen a few fight sequences, but it is only now that the game has been released in Japan (and sold well) that we've witnessed the full monty. So, after the disappointment of the over-hyped *Bouncer* – with its 53 minutes of gameplay – will *Onimusha* restore our faith in PS2 games coming out of the Land of the Rising Sun?

BLOOD AND CUTS

Don't expect a tense horror experience – this one won't be making you jump out of your skin. But there is plenty of blood and gore to keep you happy. Sword fights produce the expected amounts of red stuff accompanied by squishy sound effects – enough to make anyone wince, especially when you pull off the finishing move and slam your blade through someone's chest.

Combat is more than just the hack and slash affair it seems to be at the start and you'll need to experiment with different attack patterns and techniques. Sucking up the souls of demons that you kill builds up your hit points and magic gauges. This is the key to the game as you will need to power-up an orb gauge to open certain doors – rather than the painful searching for keys in the *Res* games.

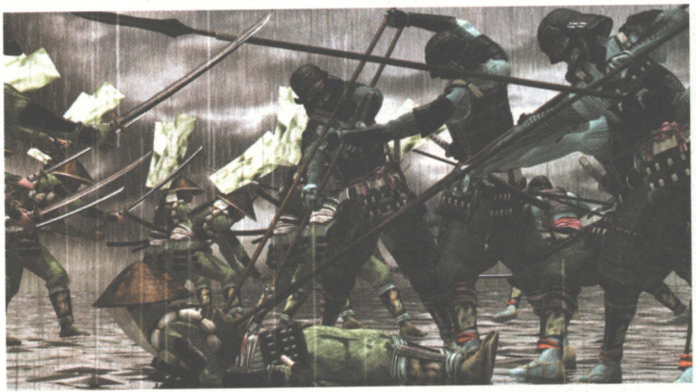
CRATEFUL DEAD

There are puzzles dotted around, but they're very logical (a ladder to go down a hole or matching symbols to open crates) – in other words, they are unlikely to get in the way

The whole thing looks good throughout

Some locations are very grim and dank

You're a hardcore swordsman, which is handy considering the legions of ninjas, samurais, zombies, trolls and demons you have to hack your way through



There are some titanic Samurai battles in the FMVs which really set the scene for what's to come

This babe gets kidnapped by a hideous demon warrior and it's your job to set her free

of the action. Even when we played the game in Japanese it was all fairly easy to get through.

But unlike no-brainer button-masher *The Bouncer*, *Onimusha* introduces some monstrous boss battles and cerebral action into the mix. There is a lot to explore, which introduces one really annoying factor we found. Some items are hidden in corners with no indicator that anything is there, so you have to search every square inch of space, which gets plain bloody annoying.

SICKLY SATISFYING

Combat is a sickly satisfying affair with different moves and weapons to play around with. Before long you'll be finishing every fight with a stylish flourish. And that *Onimusha* ranks action above the puzzles is a good thing when the combat system is such a blast. The only downer could be it may end up not offering the longevity of a *Res* game. The difficulty level will need some cranking for this to be avoided, though there are secrets to unlock, including a mini-game and trailer for – wait for it – *Onimusha 2*. Oh, and if you're interested, *Onimusha* translates as Demon Warrior.

CVG RECKONS

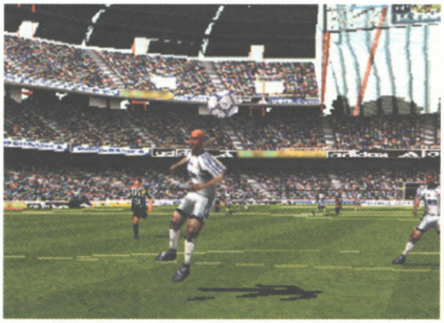
It's got the gore and the gameplay to be a winner.

END

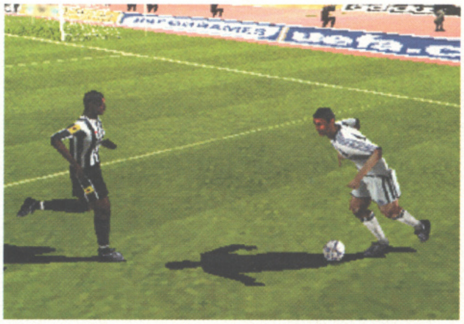
WHO ARE YA?

PLAYSTATION'S LATEST SIGNING COMES OUT PANTING

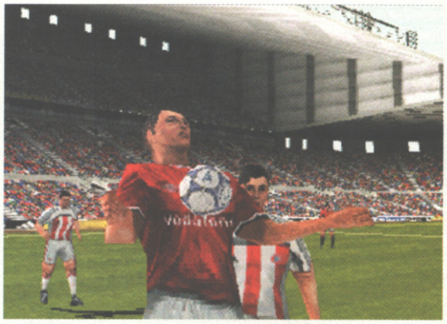
WORDS **ALEX SIMMONS** SCREENSHOTS **INFOGRAMES**



You need something special to beat the likes of *ISS*



As usual, it can look good in replays but it doesn't match *FIFA*



Dennis Irwin tests the new UEFA-standard velcro ball

UEFA CHALLENGE

OUT **APRIL** FORMAT **PSONE PC**

If you sorted PSone footy games into leagues, *ISS* would sit at the top of the table. *FIFA* would be languishing in the bottom half, threatened by relegation. And *UEFA Challenge*? It's early days, but we reckon it'd be lucky to stay afloat in the Conference.

WHO GOT GAME?

OK, so it appears to have all a decent footy game needs. Play modes are comprehensive, with anything from one-off exhibition games to entire seasons on offer, as well as 'situation' games where you must rescue lost causes and come from behind to win matches. Squad management options are quite impressive, and you can even create your own team of cup hopefuls.

RED CARD!

In reality, though, gameplay isn't as slick as the one-touch beauty of *ISS* and the graphics don't have the crisp definition of *FIFA*. It has all the right players and teams – Arsenal is Arsenal, not Highbury – but at the moment it doesn't play a particularly good game of football. And let's face it, options and team names are one thing, but the beauty is in the game.

CVG RECKONS

Without a major tactical rethink, on course for mid-table mediocrity at best.

THE ART OF FIGHTING

"TAKE TWO BLADES INTO A SWORDFIGHT? I JUST SLASH AND GO"

WORDS & SCREENSHOTS **JOHNNY MINKLEY**

KENGO

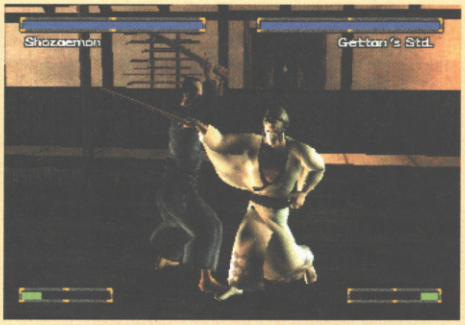
OUT **MARCH** FORMAT **PS2**

A samurai's life is a hard one. Renouncing earthly pleasures, warriors must devote themselves to their training, focussing mind, body and soul to fully-realise their inner potential.

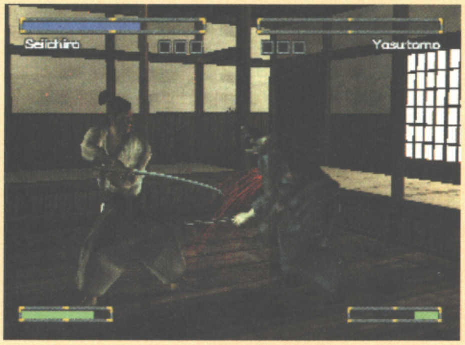
To watch samurai fight is to bear witness to a graceful, ordered and immensely skilled struggle, with countless years of training reaching maturation in a blur of cultured and choreographed fighting. Now you can learn the ways of the Samurai and pit your own skills against other sword masters.

STYLE FILE

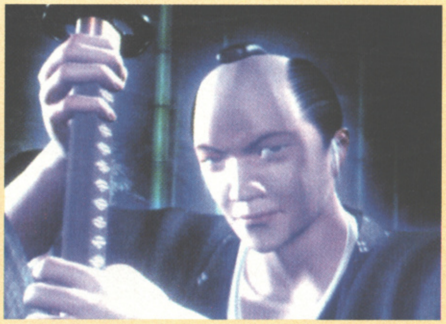
Kengo is from the team responsible for PSone's *Bushido Blade*, that thrived on its unorthodox fighting system. There was no energy bar and combat was a tense affair where one false move could mean death. Here, there's one button for attack, one for block and one to parry, with many combos possible. The fighters move with grace and poise and are well-animated, though backgrounds and colour schemes are somewhat drab.



The one player training is a highlight as you learn to block blows, parry opponents to put them off balance and land killer strikes



When someone cleaves your heart in two like this, the outlook is not good. The emphasis in *Kengo* isn't on wholesome family fun



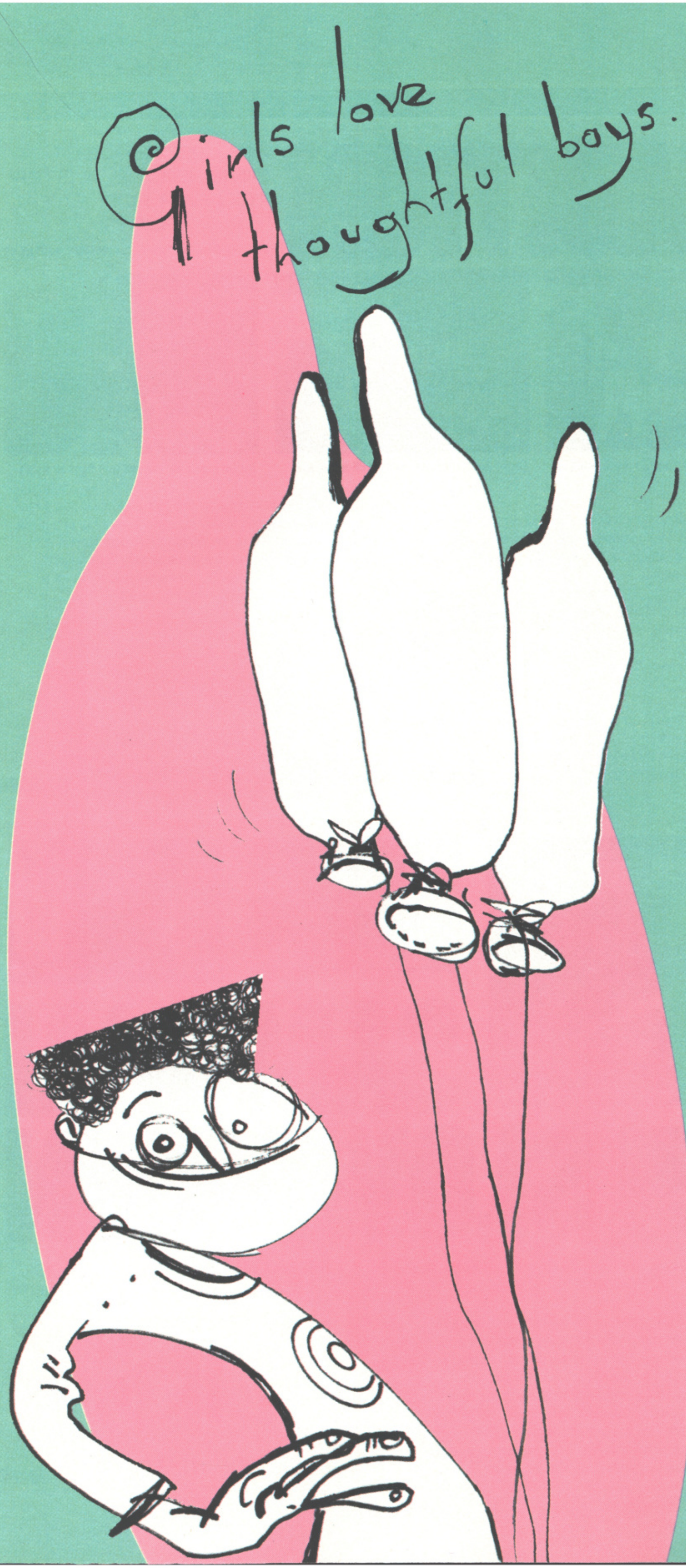
Kengo has a great pedigree in the shape of the elegant *Bushido Blade*, but this is looking worryingly like a mindless button bash

OUT OF CONTROL

The main problem we've had so far is with the controls. It seems tricky to move your samurai in the right direction and attacks can be decidedly unresponsive and sluggish with blows taking an age to land. This means bouts easily sink into mindless button bashing. The Story mode training element looks promising, but much work is needed in the control department if this is to escape from the realms of mediocrity.

CVG RECKONS

Without muchos tweaking, this could be nothing more than a mindless slasher.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What's cooler? Sex with a condom? Or sex on your own?

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But being cool about using a condom says a lot about you. Particularly to a girl who's thinking about having sex with you.

It says you've had the guts to get some. (Call us and we'll tell you where to get them free.)

It says you're interested in her feelings, not just your own.

It says you want her to feel relaxed. And safe.

It says you've thought about it. Not just for what you can get out of sex. But for what you might be able to put in.

And girls really like that.

So don't be too quick to rubbish condoms. For girls, some important things go into them.

sex

Are you thinking about it enough?

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FLAWED AMBITION

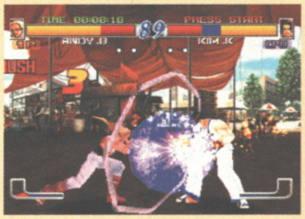
IS THREE DIMENSIONS A STEP TOO FAR FOR *FATAL FURY?*

WORDS & SCREENSHOTS **JOHNNY MINKLEY**

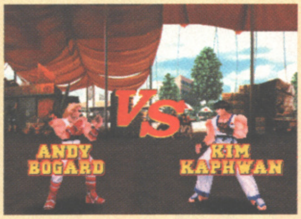
FATAL FURY: WILD AMBITION

OUT **MARCH** FORMAT **PSONE**

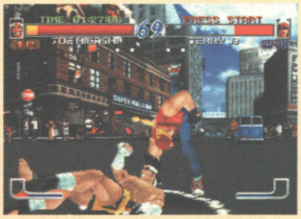
***Fatal Fury: Wild Ambition* is one of two attempts by SNK to breathe life back into one of its classic beat 'em up franchises (see *Samurai Shodown*, below). Though never reaching the heights of *Street Fighter 2*'s genius, the *FF* series has always had a die-hard following for its 2D incarnations and the stalwart *SF 2* clone has now been given the 3D treatment. But on current inspection, this may well prove a big mistake.**



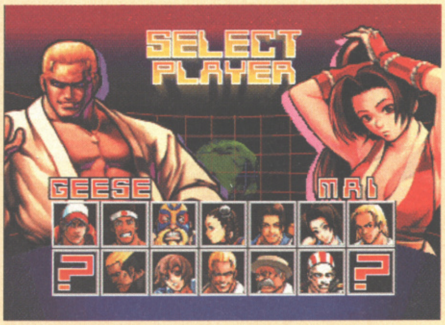
Sadly it looks dated before it's even released



These guys are hardly the stuff of legend



Traffic waits for the tedious fight to finish



***Fatal Fury*'s character roster always was a motley collection of half-baked heroes, foolish looking freaks and assorted nutters**

BLASTS FROM THE PAST

Unlike *Samurai Shodown*, which despite the 3D display remains a rigidly 2D fighter, *FF: WA* operates more like *Tekken*, as it includes the ability to sidestep in and out of the screen, adding an extra level to the gameplay.

All the classic characters have been included so players can choose from the likes of cheesy, cap-wearing, mullet-man Terry Bogard, or the evil Geese Howard and his comedy trousers. Somewhat worryingly, though, from what we've seen so far, that's about all this game has in its favour.

PREMATURE AGING

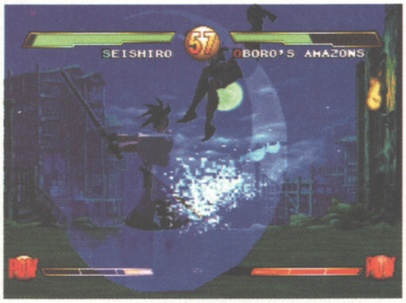
Barring miracles of biblical proportions, *FF: WA* is shaping up to be an exceptionally weak beat 'em up. We thought *Samurai Showdown* was sluggish until we played this, but *FF: WA* is almost painful in its slothfullness. Beat 'em ups are all about speed of reaction and intense fighting, but at present this game has all the reaction speed of clay pig and the intensity of a game of tiddlywinks played out by the world's two eldest librarians.

The graphics are terrible, the game already looks several years old and it doesn't have *SS*'s character-building mode to provide any more slightly longer-lasting interest.

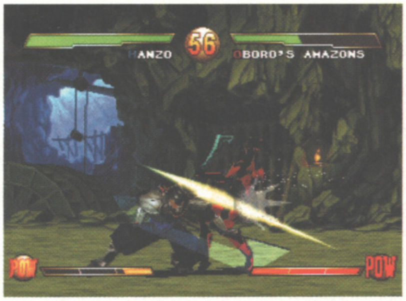
CVG RECKONS

SNK will need to move mountains for its Wild *ambitions to be realised.*

END



Despite some good effects and animations, *SS* looks cruddy



The action needs to get a whole lot faster for this to work

SAMURAI SLOWDOWN

SLUGGISH UPDATE OF A 2D CLASSIC

WORDS & SCREENSHOTS **JOHNNY MINKLEY**

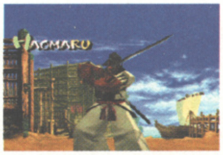
SAMURAI SHODOWN: WARRIOR'S RAGE

OUT **MARCH** FORMAT **PSONE**

***Street Fighter 2* really has got a lot to answer for. Since its success, we've faced a raging torrent of inferior clones. Capcom's classic provided the blueprint for the ultimate fighter which developers have pillaged left, right and centre, but like the KFC Colonel's secret blend of herbs and spices, the magic ingredient that made *SF2* rock has been less easy to replicate.**

A NEW DIMENSION

One title that did stand out amid the hordes of half-arsed copycats was *Samurai Shodown*. It looked awesome with fantastically drawn sprites and backdrops, and contained skillful gameplay with a different emphasis to *SF2*'s hardcore, combo-heavy battles. SNK wants to repeat this success by giving its title an up-to-date 3D makeover along the lines of *Street Fighter EX3*. Unfortunately, like the *SF* update, *SS* loses much of its distinctive graphical style with the addition of a third dimension.



The graphical style has changed

STOP AND START

The visuals here are frankly ropey at the moment, with unstable polygons flickering away, though the animation is impressive at times. Currently the game is also extremely sluggish to play, a problem made worse by the nature of the bouts, which are interrupted for no apparent reason each time one of the fighter's three energy bars is depleted, totally destroying any momentum.

Finish the game once, and you get Attack mode, allowing you to customise combatants, which should add to long term appeal, but it'll need more than that to stand up the likes of *Tekken Tag*.

CVG RECKONS

Looks to be heading for the great gaming graveyard of also-rans and mess-ups.

END

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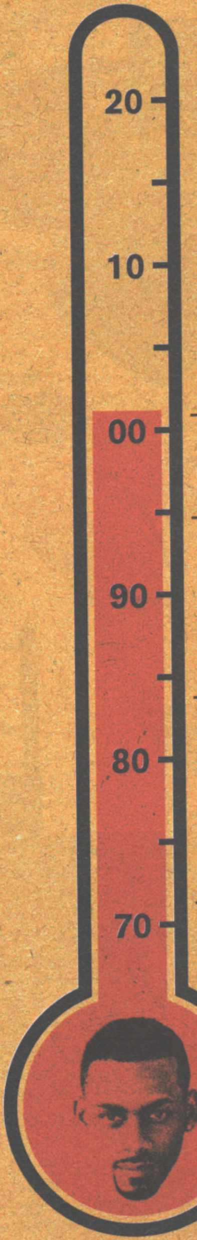

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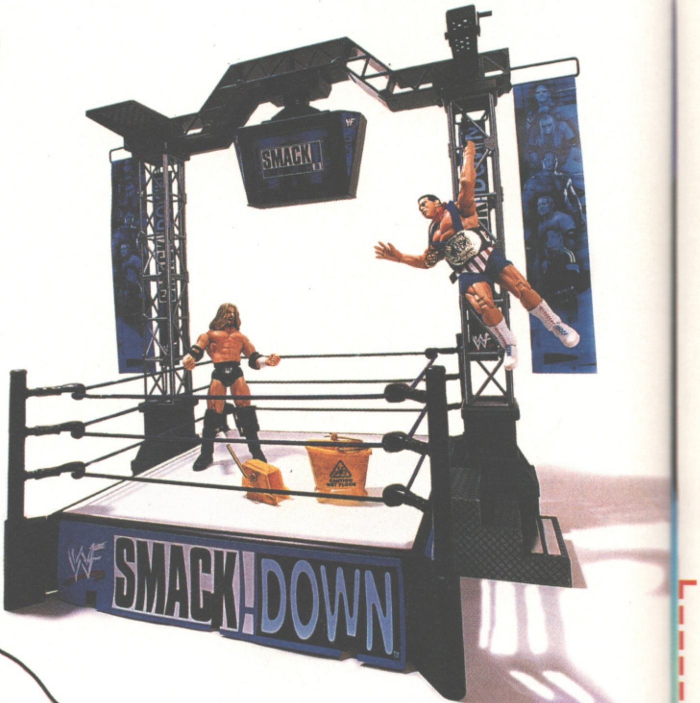

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Jamie Hughes, Wanstead
Dean Brown, Tyne & Wear
R Cane, London
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D Corkhill, West Yorkshire
Peter Lloyd, Machester
Oliver Colligan, Staffs
Jonathan Markham, Cambs

MAJORA'S MASK CD

Stephen Crowley, Staffs
Joseph Green, Manchester
S Marshall, Leeds
Viv Sunley, Hants
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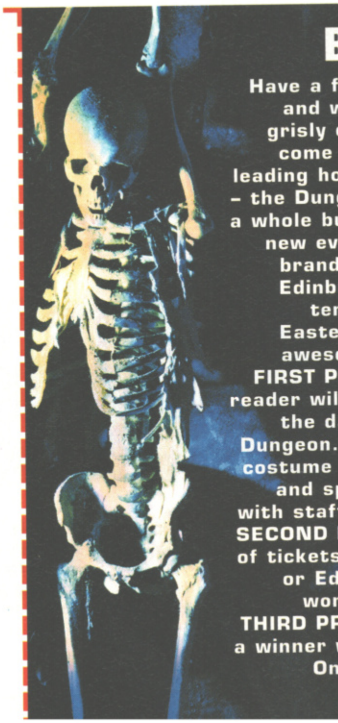

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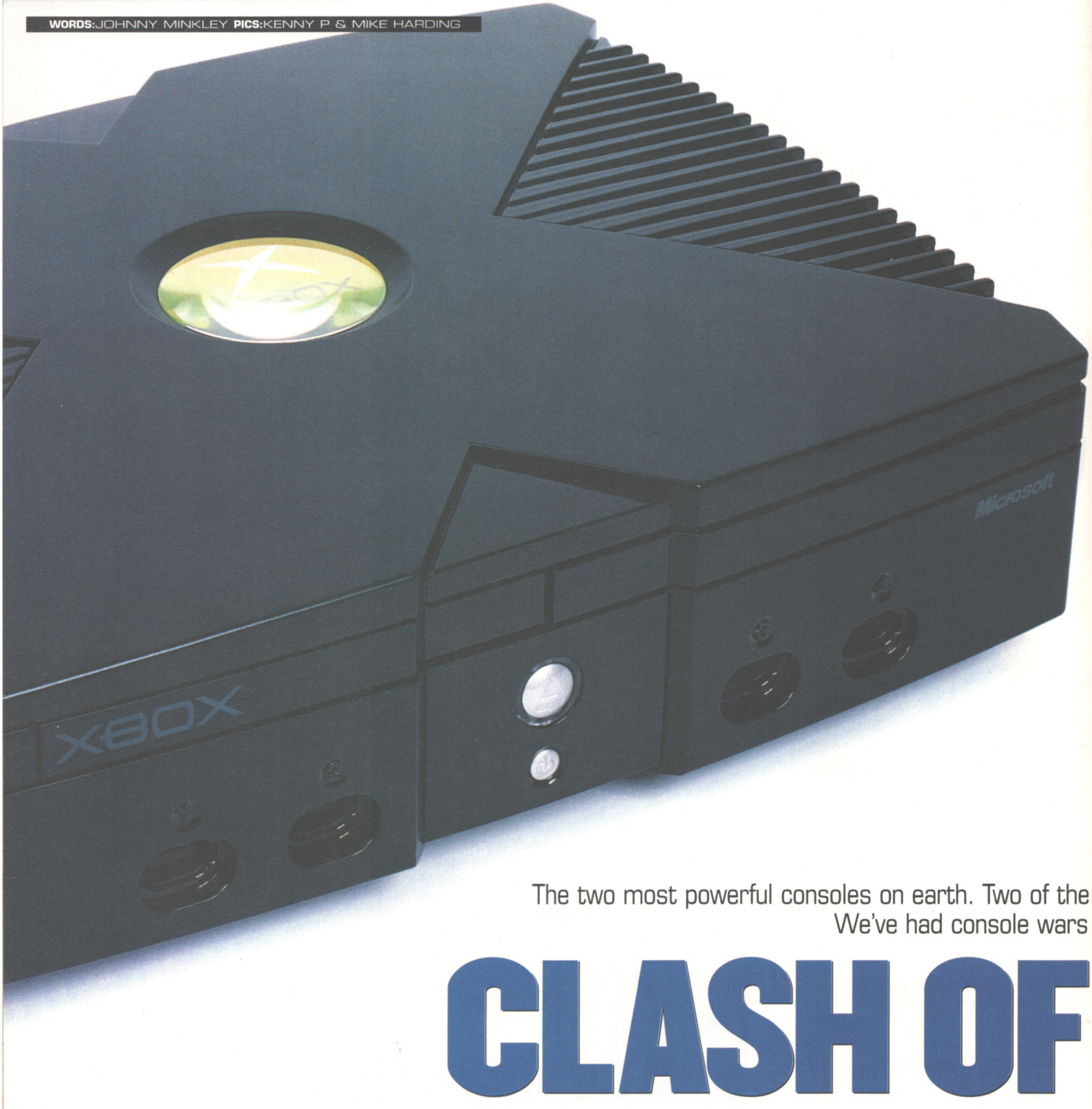


The two most powerful consoles on earth. Two of the
We've had console wars

CLASH OF

On the 6th of January 2001, at the Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas, Xbox was finally unveiled to an expectant world. After months of speculation regarding final design and specifications, the world was finally put out of its misery. Sift through the hype and it's clear that Xbox will be a phenomenally powerful console with capabilities far beyond

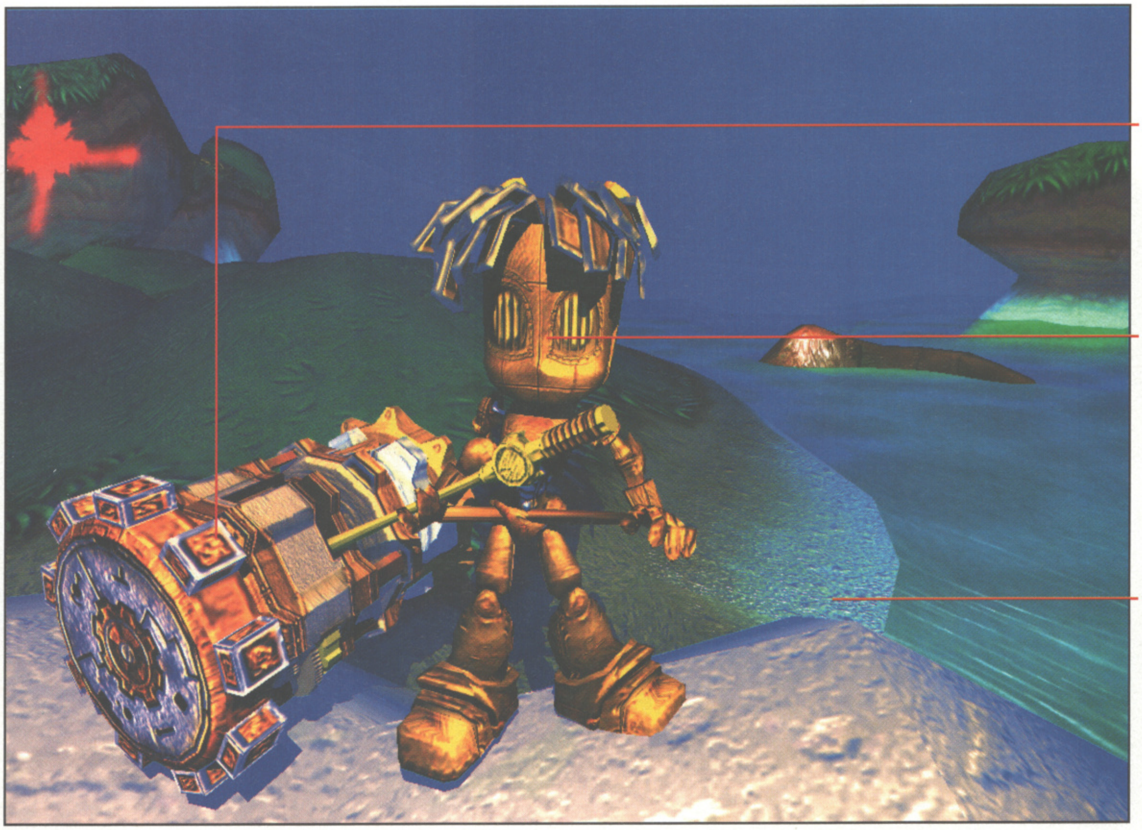
most powerful companies on earth. Can Xbox steal Sony's thunder?
before, but never on this scale...

THE TITANS

anything currently available on the home market. High specifications are all well and good of course, but what does all this actually mean, in real terms, for the average gamer? Will Xbox provide titles beyond our wildest imaginations? And more importantly, how will Microsoft's box of wonder compete against the mighty PS2? Questions, questions. Time for some answers...

SPOT THE DIFFERENCE

Instead of printing a load of meaningless (and misleading) numbers, we thought the best way to emphasise the differences between Xbox and PS2 would be by way of a side-by-side comparison of their current premier titles,



- In terms of textures, Xbox wipes the floor with PS2, offering the potential for incredibly rich visuals. It can display four textures simultaneously per polygon and has a relatively large amount of VRAM, which is used in displaying textures. In layman's terms, the incredible textures you can see here are just the tip of the iceberg of what will be possible in the future. This is all good news as far as gamers are concerned

- Despite the claims of 125 million polygons per second, in reality Xbox, when pushed to the limit, should be able to push a still staggering 60-70 million p/s. This will allow for incredibly detailed, smooth objects and backgrounds. *Malice* is shifting 10-20 million when operating on a machine allegedly 1/5 the power of the final Xbox, yet still manages to amaze. If Microsoft's claims are indeed found to be true, there'll be slack-jaws aplenty in gaming land

- One of the things that will really make the Xbox stand out is its incredible lighting capabilities - in many ways, this will be the feature that really separates the Xbox from PS2 in terms of visuals. Designed with this specifically in mind, Xbox will use lighting to bring out minute details on objects. Pushed all the way, it can create real-time graphics on a par with the dinosaurs in Jurassic Park, which relied so heavily on lighting to achieve their immense impact

THE FUTURE OF GAMING?

The demo of *Malice* displayed at CES, was allegedly running on an Xbox development kit only one fifth the power of the final machine, as the much-vaunted nVidia graphics is not yet complete. If you've seen the demo in action (if not, check it out at our website, www.computerandvideogames.com) then you'll appreciate the implications of such a statement. With enough raw power to make PS2 scuttle away with its tail between its legs, Xbox has the potential to revolutionise gaming. For the first time, a home console will come out of the box with a hard drive that dramatically increases gaming potential, allowing for some truly gargantuan multiplayer titles in the future.

DEVELOPER'S DREAM

While many developers – even big guns such as Konami – have admitted to having difficulties getting the most out of the PS2, the Xbox has been designed to make game design as swift and painless as possible. As a result, Microsoft's console has become irresistible to many companies and has even tempted some away from Sony. A major coup occurred when Oddworld announced the cancellation of *Munch's Oddysee* for PS2, making it an Xbox exclusive.

Lorne Lanning, president of Oddworld Inhabitants commented on this decision, stating: "When we started work on Xbox we were shouting, 'Hurray, we can do everything we wanted to do!' Dynamic lighting has been a critical part of this." He also commented on Microsoft's commitment to supporting developers: "Compared to Sony, the level of support at Microsoft is excellent."

This must be music to Microsoft's ears, but things are going entirely in Microsoft's favour across the board.

WILL EAST MEET WEST?

A vital factor in the future of Xbox is Japan. If Microsoft wins the Japanese over, they could well go on to dominate the market, but if the Japanese refuse their advances, that could spell trouble. The position adopted by Japanese developers at the moment is 'wait and see'. Many companies, such as Konami, have invested a huge amount of money in the PS2, and they're not about to drop that in favour of an unproven, if powerful newcomer. Hence, Xbox will only get a 'director's cut' of *Metal Gear Solid* – a fusion of elements from the PSone original and the sequel – with the PS2 getting the whole sequel exclusively.

The worry for Microsoft is that the Xbox could potentially become another DC, an incredibly powerful machine, crippled by a lack of big-name third-party titles. Microsoft will get huge support from Europe and the USA, but in all honesty a vast proportion of the greatest, most imaginative games come from The Land of the Rising Sun – think

NOT JUST BIG ON THE INSIDE

Alongside its mammoth power, Xbox is the biggest console we've ever seen, more akin to a VCR than a games console. The PS2 is huge (in console terms) but Xbox is a giant, symbolic perhaps of Microsoft's desire for their console to be the biggest fish in the gaming pond. To illustrate, here's a side-by-side comparison of current machines, from David to Goliath.

GBC: Small, but perfectly formed

GBA: Half as thick as original GB

PSone: Sony reckoned less was more

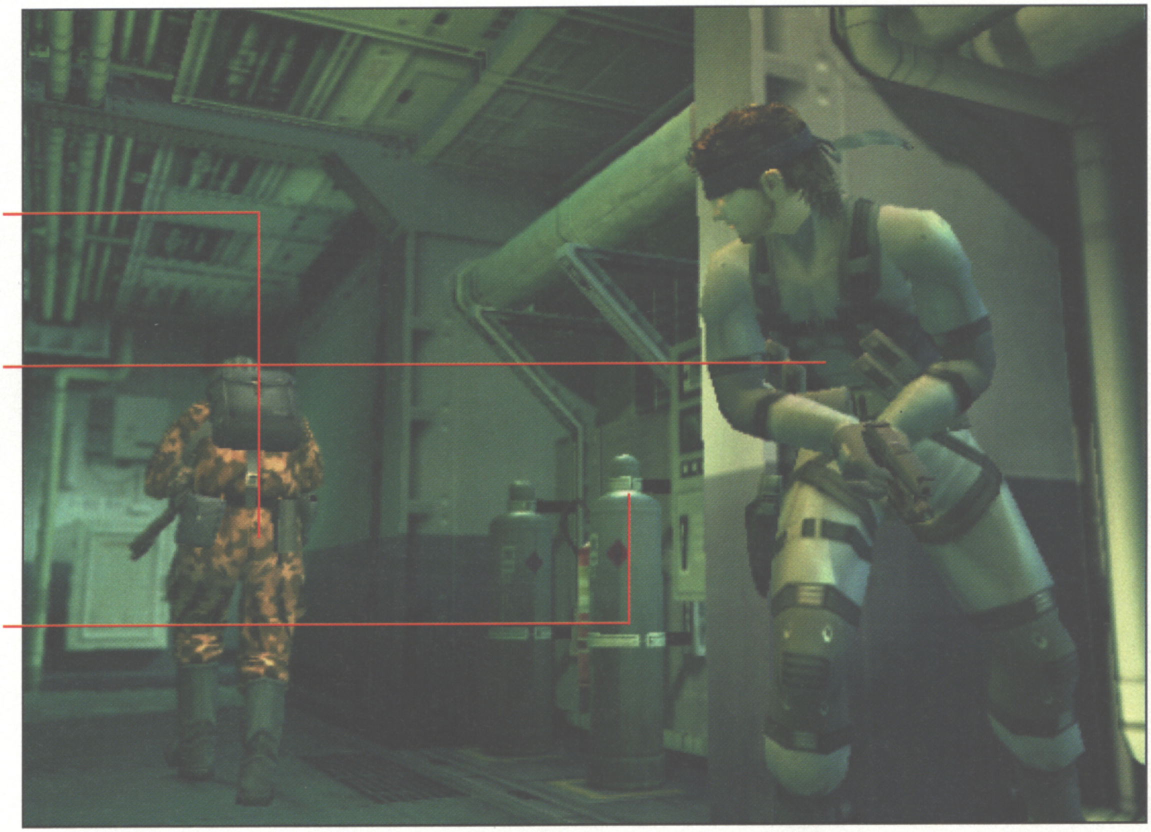
DC: Clean, compact and... dying

Malice on Xbox, and _Metal Gear Solid 2_ on PS2. In the wake of the immense hype that accompanied the launch of the PS2, many gamers have subsequently been disappointed with the quality of software so far, coming to expect graphics not too far advanced on existing DC games. _MGS2_ will change expectations forever though, but will even Konami's masterpiece be able to compete with the raw power of Xbox?

- Developers have a really tough time getting decent textures into PS2 games, largely due to the limited VRAM available. Though titles like *Shadow of Memories* are generally graphically impressive, they simply aren't that richly textured. *MGS2* does look incredible, but it takes one of the finest developments teams in the world to squeeze out such performance. This will be far easier on Xbox

- The astonishingly realistic visuals in *MGS2* are a result of developers pushing PS2 to the limit, getting a performance of between 10-20 million p/s. It's unlikely you'll ever see anything significantly better on PS2 in its lifespan, but that's not exactly a cause for concern. The very fact that Hideo Kojima has produced results that eclipse every other effort on the PS2 is, however, hinting at the difficulty developers have achieving such graphical splendour

- PS2 simply cannot compete on the same level as Xbox in terms of lighting. Though it can create some tremendously sharp and atmospheric visuals, there is a limit as to how far developers are able to push the hardware. Put another way, PS2 could probably recreate Jurassic Park' s dinosaurs, but without the correct lighting they just wouldn't look as impressive



Final Fantasy, *Gran Turismo*, *Metal Gear Solid* and Sega's first-party software, for example. With franchises like *Tekken* and *Final Fantasy* waiting in the wings, Microsoft needs to impress Japan fast, and Bill Gates' keynote speech at the Tokyo Game Show in March will be crucial.

PLAYSTATION 3

Just as everyone is coming to terms with Xbox's power, rumours begin about the release of PlayStation 3 in the not-too-distant-future. Last Summer, at a technology conference, Sony displayed kit that was essentially 16 PS2s linked together. A demo of a scene from The Matrix was shown operating in real-time, and since then rumours have abounded that this was the prototype for the PS3. With Ken Kuturagi, SCEI's CEO, alluding to a machine 1000 times as powerful as the PS2, this seems increasingly likely, and from what we've heard the PS3's hardware is now finalised.

Sony has refused to rule out a release before 2005, and sources have suggested it may appear as early as late 2002.This is hardly good news for people that have already forked out their hard-earned cash for a PS2, as it's reasonable to expect a certain degree of longevity to accompany such a pricy purchase. Either way, it very much depends on the success of the Xbox: if Microsoft seriously dents the PS2' sales, Sony may well be more inclined to release an update sooner than later.

BLOOD ON THE CARPET

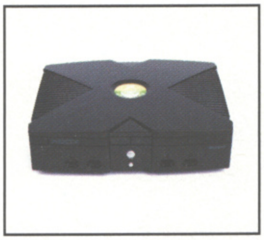
Microsoft and Sony are two of the most powerful companies on the planet, so the fight for supremacy will be tough. Now Microsoft has shown (much of) its hand, the battle lines have been drawn, but it's incredibly difficult to predict a winner. By the time Xbox is released it will have a hell of a lot of ground to make up on the PS2, which should have an enormous installed userbase by then. It's highly likely that Sony will cut prices by at least 50 quid come Christmas, when there ought to be a formidable line up of software to match. So, Microsoft will need to hit the ground running, but if anyone has the financial clout to weather the initial storm, it's Bill Gates and his mighty empire – and they're sticking $500m on marketing alone.

Xbox is a formidable piece of hardware and the infrastructure is in place for developers to create some truly mind-blowing, genuinely revolutionary software – one thing that cannot be faulted is Microsoft's commitment to creating hardware that is developer-friendly.

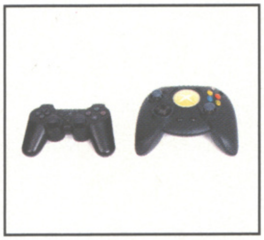
Of course, the same was allegedly true with the PS2, and we haven't exactly been flooded with innovative software this far, so it's up to developers, and they now have little excuse not to deliver. For gamers at least, such fierce competition can only be a good thing, as it will provoke developers into pushing each machine further, achieving ever greater results. We suggest you sit back, hold tight and enjoy the ride.

N64: Sleek compared with Saturn

PS2: Smaller than was expected



Xbox: Woah, there, big momma!!



Even the Xbox joypad dwarfs its rivals

CVG RECKONS

Yeah, the Xbox is an amazingly powerful machine, but that's no guarantee of great software. With the PS2 we know we're getting titles like *MGS2*, but so far Xbox is largely an unknown quantity. Both machines are capable of incredible things, but what we and all gamers want to see are original, innovative, stunning games. Let's hope we're not disappointed.

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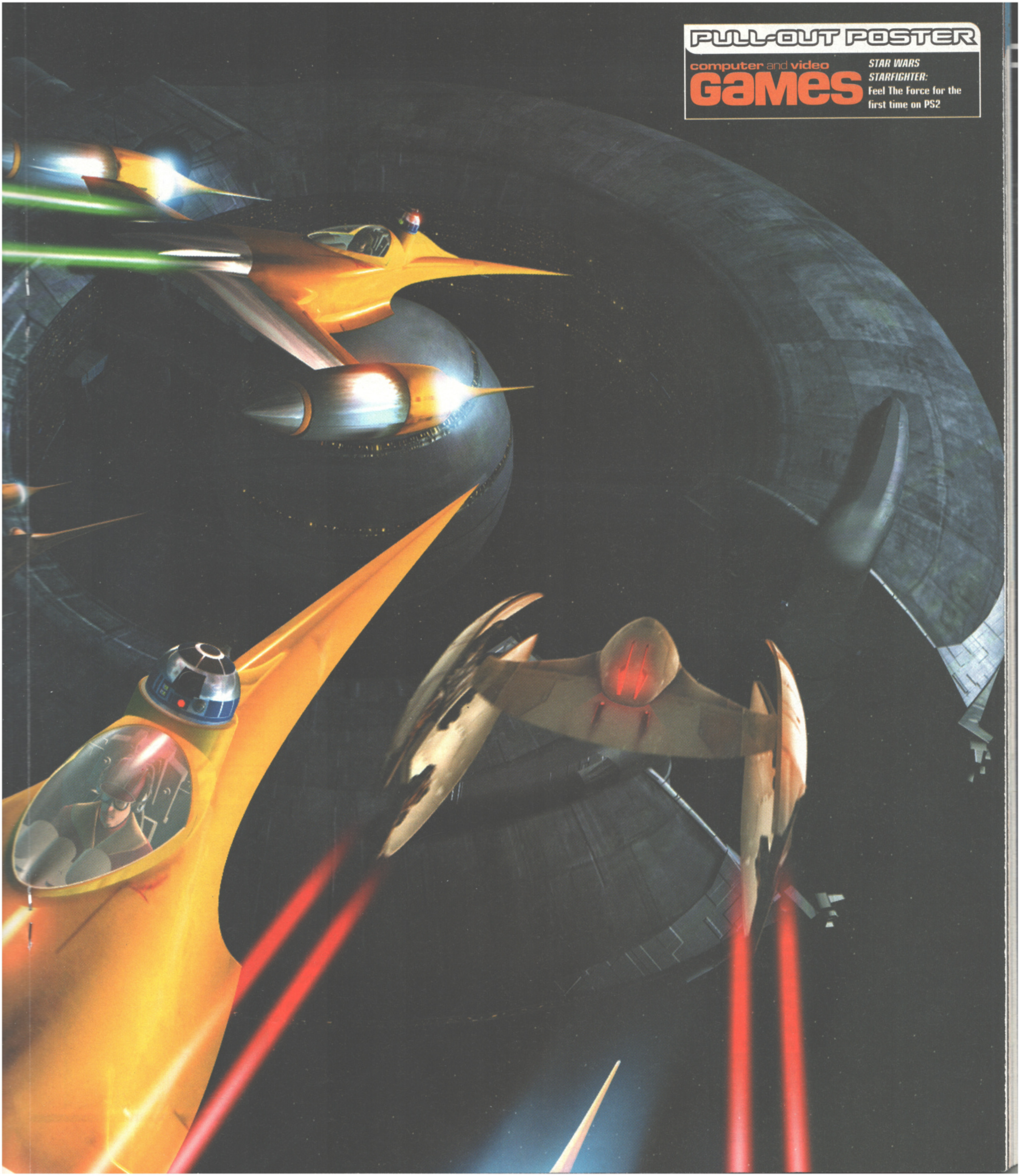


PULL-OUT POSTER

computer and video GAMES

STAR WARS STARFIGHTER:
Feel The Force for the first time on PS2

EASY MO

There are many ways to earn money. You can play the pauper and beg down your local train station. You can go door to door offering to program people's video timers. But we've got a better idea. With Easy Money you can play games to death and send any tips, cheats and codes you come up with. If we print your entry then we'll reward your efforts with a handy tenner for you to blow on your aniseed addiction.

TIP OF THE MONTH

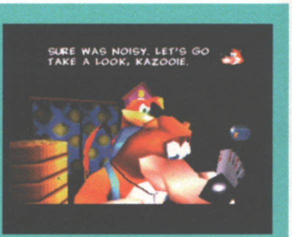
PlayStation

■ BANJO TOOIE

There are loads of cheats hidden throughout Banjo Tooie but you have to collect pages from Cheato's Notebook before you can use them. There are other ways, however, and Nicola Dawlish from Watford has found some extra codes that should make Cheato redundant.

Gain access to the Code Chamber in the Mayahem Temple. Enter these codes anytime after in the same way you would one of Cheato's cheats. Spell out CHEATO on the grid and then access the panel on the right of the Temple.

CODE	WHAT YOU GET
JIGGYWIGGYSPECIAL	Opens up all levels
NESTKING	Infinite eggs and feathers
SUPERBANJO	Banjo moves faster
SUPERBADDY	Enemies move faster
PLAYITAGAINSON	Unlocks all movies
JIGGYSCASTLIST	Movie of all the game characters



Out-cheat Cheato in *Banjo Tooie*

PLAYSTATION 2

■ DYNASTY WARRIORS 2

Ronnie Marsters from Warrington has sent us some sharp codes to enhance this sword-slasher.

All the codes should be entered at the title screen and will be confirmed by a screaming sound.
FREE MODE SIDE SELECTION: Hold Triangle and press R1, L1, L2, R2, R1,L1, L2, R2.
SHU CHARACTERS: Square, Square, R1, R1, R2,R2, Square, Square.
WU CHARACTERS: Square, Square, R2, R2, R1, R1, Square, Square.

■ ARMOURED CORE 2

Simon Collins sent these babies in.

INVINCIBILITY: Press L2, R2 and R3 . You should see a 'Limiter Release' message. You will then have unlimited energy, but only for a short time until you see the 'OB System Error' message. After approximately one minute your AC will be fully recharged.
PLUS CHEATS: Deliberately fail the first mission after the Raven Test and die with under 50,000 credits. Strangely, you will be able to access Plus Cheats. When you restart the first level you will have all the items from the last game. Repeat to unlock more Plus Cheats.

DREAMCAST

■ TOM CLANCY'S RAINBOW 6

Cheers to Ryan Jones from Newport for sending us these fun codes.

All codes should be entered during gameplay.
GOD MODE: Press the Analogue stick Up and the D-Pad Down plus A.
TEAM GOD MODE: Press the Analogue stick Left and the D-Pad Down plus A.
HEAVY BREATHING MODE: Press the Analogue stick Down and the D-Pad Down plus A.
MEGA HEAD MODE: Press the Analogue stick Left and the D-Pad Down plus X.
STUMPY MODE: Press the Analogue stick Left and the D-Pad Down plus Y.
SIDE SCROLLER MODE: Press the Analogue stick Down and the D-Pad Down plus Y.
TOGGLE AI: Press the Analogue stick Up and the D-Pad Down plus Y.

■ 4x4 EVOLUTION

Frankie Weaver of Middlesbrough shows us the money with these.

How to find hidden cash:
ARIZONA: Go to Gate 6 and head to the town just past the mountains. You should eventually reach a small town where you'll find the money.
BLACK GOLD: Find the cash box near the oil truck in the fenced-in area between Gates 6 and 7.
CRAZY 2000: Go into the water just before the Finish to find another Cash Box at the back of the pool.
FARM ROAD: Search the middle of the pond for more money.
LAGUNA DEL RAY: Look on the island on the right to find a chest full of money.
MOTORCROSS: Check inside the portable toilet on the hill between Gates 5 and 6 next to the tent.

PLAYSTATION

■ 007 RACING

We've got Alex Carter from Penzance to thank for these.

BIG CIVILIANS: Enter the name LEMKE.
ASTON MARTIN VANTAGE IN MULTIPLAYER: At the Title screen press L1, R1, Triangle, Circle, X. You should hear the sound of someone laughing to confirm that you've entered the code correctly. Then you're away.

SCORE
000100
HELLFIRE
HEALTH

■ HYDRO THUNDER

David Neale from Chester has sent us some cool codes for this superboat racing game.

HIDDEN TRACK: Select Back on the Options screen, press Up, Up, Down, Up, Down, Down, Start.
HYDRO JUMP: When boosting, hold R1, then press X and Square. Super jump is yours.
VENICE CANALS SECRET BONUS: At the bridge after the red boost, go far right to go under the bridge and find the hidden bonus.
FAR EAST SHORTCUT: After passing the blue boost, you should reach some waterfalls and a tunnel. Jump over the tunnel to drastically cut your time.
VENICE CANALS SHORT CUT: Just after the docks, you should reach three very difficult turns. Instead of twisting and turning yourself into a frenzy, simply leap over the island in the middle.

NINTENDO 64

■ THE WORLD IS NOT ENOUGH

Nathan Storie from Salisbury says he's managed to beat all the time trial cheats and unlock all the secrets.

UNLOCK CIVILIAN DEATH MATCH SKINS: Finish City of Walkways 1 level in under 3.35.
UNLOCK CLASSIC SKINS INCLUDING TUXEDO BOND, ODDJOB AND JAWS: Finish the game on Secret Agent setting.
UNLOCK CHRISTMAS JONES IN A FROCK, ALEX TREVLYAN,WAI LIN, MAX ZORAN AND MAY DAY: Finish the game on Agent Setting.
UNLOCK SOLDIER SKINS: Complete the Midnight Departure level on Agent setting in under 3.05. Easier said than done.

ONEY

PC CD-ROM

BLAIR WITCH VOLUME 2: THE LEGEND OF COFFIN ROCK

Claire Heason from Norwich sent in these cracking codes.

All codes should be entered after pressing F10 during gameplay.

CODE	WHAT YOU GET
iamawimpforthis	100 Bullets
getintomybelly	All Weapons
sunofgod	Charge Radiance Emitter
hellfreezeover	Disable enemy AI
gibnplenty	Dismemberment Mode
givemefaith	Full Health
flameonastick	Flaming Ammunition
iworkforgod	Invincibility

SACRIFICE

Feast your eyes on these great cheats courtesy of Paul Greig from Croydon.

First enable the console by pressing Ctrl, Shift and ~ during gameplay.

CODE	WHAT YOU GET
yourbulletscannotharmme	Invincibility
castratetheheathens	Collect Red Souls
bythepowerofgreyskull	Full Health
ihavethepower	Full Mana
dontfearthereaper	32 Souls
ragebuilding	Instant Level Up To Level

FALLOUT 2

Dean Lanaway from Kenilworth is totally skill for sending these in.

DEVELOPER CHIT CHAT: Hold down Shift during Credits to hear some blah from the Developers.

EXTRA EXP: Repair the computer in NCR where the girl asks you to talk the Policeman out of killing himself. Then talk to the girl to get 4000Exp, a book and a first aid kit. Repair the computer again for the same reward.

EVEN MORE EXP: Finish the game once, go to Commercial Row, New Reno. Talk to the drunk to get the hint book. Read the book for 10,000Exp

GAMEBOY COLOR

INSPECTOR GADGET

Jayme Penrose from Lichfield wants to pass on these level codes for this brilliant game. Nice one, J.

LEVEL PASSWORDS:

LEVEL	CODE
The Plasma Heart	FH2KBH
The Volcano	FM!PQM
The Vats	FRVTLR
The Underground	FWQZ!?

TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 2

Sy Oliver from Chiswick reckons he can play TH2 on his Gameboy while riding his skateboard at the same time. That's good skills.

All codes should be entered at the Password Input screen.

CODE	WHAT YOU GET
V!T!MBBBBBVV	$50 000 for Tony Hawk
B58LPTGBBBBV	All boards and levels unlocked
VTPMPSBBBBVV	All skateparks open plus Falcon board
CJFBV3KTKC2B	Unlock the Mexico Bullring plus all Burquist's boards.

CHEATS UNLIMITED
THE WORLD'S NUMBER ONE CHOICE FOR GAMING HELP
TIPS, CHEATS & WALKTHROUGHS
TOP WALKTHROUGHS PLUS OVER 10,000 CHEATS & TIPS

A - 01
A Bug's Life
Abe's Exoddus
Abe's Oddysee
Ace Combat 2 & 3
Actua Golf
Actua Ice Hockey
Actua Soccer 3
Aero Fighters Assault
Aerowings
Age of Empires 1 & 2
Agent Armstrong
Akuji the Heartless
Alien Resurrection
Alien vs Predator
All Star Tennis
Alleyway
Alone in the Dark 2
Alundra 1 & 2
Andretti Racing
Anna Kournikova Tennis
Ape Escape
Apocalypse
Area 51
Armorines
Armoured Core
Army Men Series
Atlantis
Auto Destruct
Azure Dreams
B - 02
B Movie
Baldur's Gate
Ball Blazer Champions
Banjo Kazooie
Batman and Robin
Batman Forever
Battle Tanx Global Ass.
Beast Wars Transformers
Beetle Adventure Racing
Bio Freaks
Blast Corps
Blast Radius
Blasto
Blaze and Blade
Blood Omen
Bloody Roar 1 & 2
Blue Stinger
Body Harvest
Bomberman
Brahma Force
Breath of Fire 3
Brian Lara Cricket
Broken Sword 1 & 2
Bubble Bobble
Bubsy 3D
Buck Bumble
B. Bunny Crazy Castle 4
Bugs Bunny Lost in Time
Bust A Move 2
C - 03
Caesar 3
Cannon Fodder
Cardinal Syn
Carmaggedon 1 & 2
Casper
Castlevania Series
Castrol Honda S'bike
Champ. Manager Series
Champ. Motocross
Chase the Express
Choo-Choo Rocket
Chronicles of the Sword
Circuit Breakers
Civilisation 1 & 2
Clayfighter 64
Clock Tower Ghost Head
Colin McRae Rally 1 & 2
Colonization
Colony Wars Series
C & C Seires
Commandos Series:
Construdor
Contra Legacy of War
Coolboarders Series
Courier Crisis
Crash Band. Series
Crazy Taxi
Crime Crackers
Crime Killer
Croc 1 & 2
D - 04
D
Daikatana
Dance Dance Revolution
Dark Forces
Dark Reign
Darklight Conflict
Darkstalkers 3
Dead Ballzone
Dead or Alive 1 & 2
Deadly Skies
Deathtrap Dungeon
Delta Force 1 & 2
Demolition Racer
Destrega
Destruction Derby Series
Devil Dice
Diablo 1 & 2
Diddy Kong Racing
Die Hard Trilogy 1 & 2
Dino Crisis 1 & 2
Discworld 2 & Noir
Disney's Dinosaur
Disruptor
Donkey Kong 64
Donkey Kong Land 3
Doom Series
Dracula Resurrection
Dracula X
Dragon Warrior Monst.
Dragonball
Driver 1 & 2
Duke Nukem Series
Dukes of Hazzard
Dune
Dungeon Keeper 1 & 2
Dynamite Cop
E - 05
Eagle One Harrier Att.
Earth 2150
Earthworm Jim 1, 2&3D
Ecco the Dolphin
ECW Hardcore Revol.
Ehrgeiz
Eliminator
ESPN Extreme Games
Euro 2000
Everybody's Golf
Evolution
Exhumed
Expendable
F - 06
F1 World Grand Prix
FA Manager
Fade to Black
Fear Effect
Felony 11-79
FIFA 97, 98, 99 & 2000
Fifth Element
Fighter's Impact
Fighting Force 1 & 2
Final Doom
Final Fantasy 7,8 & 9
Firestorm
Fisherman's Bait
Flight Sim 98
Formula 1 Series
Forsaken
Forty Winks
Four Wheel Thunder
Future Cop: LAPD
F-Zero X
F - 07
Gabriel Knight 3
Gangsters
Gauntlet Legends
Gex
Ghost in the Shell
Global Domination
Glover
Goal Storm
Golden Eye
Gran Turismo 1 & 2
GTA 1,2 & 1969
Grid Runner
GT 64 Champ. Edition
Guardian's Crusade
H - 09
Half Life
Hard Edge
Harvest Moon
Heart Of Darkness
Hercules
Hermie Hopperhead
Heroes of M. & Magic III
Hexen
Hidden and Dangerous
Hogs of War
Homeworld
House of the Dead 2
Hybrid Heaven
Hydro Thunder
I - 10
Impact Racing
In Cold Blood
Independence Day
I. Jones & Inf. Machine
Int. Track and Field
Int. Cricket Captain
Iron Man XO Manowar
ISS DX, Pro & Pro Evol.
J - 11
J McGrath S'cross 98
Jackie Chan Stuntmaster
Jade Cocoon
James Bond 007
Jet Force Gemini
Jimmy White's 2 Cueball
Jonah Lomu Rugby
Jurassic Park: Lost World
K - 11
Killer Instinct & Gold
Kingpin
KKND Krossfire
Knockout Kings
Krazy Ivan
Kula World
L - 12
Le Mans 24 hrs
Legends of Legaiai
Lego Racers
LMA Manager
Loaded
Lone Soldier
Longest Journey
M - 13
Machine Hunter
Mario Series
Marvel Series
Max Power Racing
MDK 1 & 2
Medal of Honour
Medievil 1 & 2
Megaman X4
Men In Black
Metal Gear Solid
Mickey's Racing Adv.
Mickey's Wild Adventure
Micro Machines
Micro Maniacs
Midtown Madness
Mission Impossible
Monaco Grand Prix
Monster Trucks
Mortal Kombat Series
Motocross Madness
Mr Domino
MTV Snowboarding
MTV Sports Pure Ride
Multi-Racing Champ.
N - 14
NBA Live Series
Need For Speed Series
Nightmare Creatures
Ninja
No Fear Downhill MBK
Nuclear Strike
O - 15
ODT
Omikron
Overblood 1 & 2
Overboard
P - 16
Pac In Time
Pac Man World
Pandemonium 1 & 2
Parasite Eve 1 & 2
Perfect Dark
Pharoah
Pilot Wings
Player Manager Series
Pocket Bomberman
Pocohontas
Point Blank 1 & 2
Pokemon Series
Pong
Pool Shark
Populous: The Beginning
Power Modeller
Power Move Pro Wrest.
Powerstone 1 & 2
Premier Manager
Prince of Persia
Q - 17
Quake 2,3 & 64
R - 18
Rage Racer
Rainbow Six
Rampage: World Tour
Rapid Racer
Rascal
Ray Crisis
Rayman 1 & 2
RC Stunt Copter
Ready 2 Rumble
Reboot
Re-loaded
Resident Evil Series
Return Fire
Re-Volt
Ridge Racer Type 4
Rise of the Robots 2
Riven
Road Rash & 3D
Roadsters
Rock & Roll Racing 2
Rockman X3
Rogue Trip
Roll Cage
Roller Coaster Tycoon
Ronaldo V Football
R-Type Delta
Rugrats Series
S - 19
Samba De Amigo
Sampras Extreme Tennis
Samurai Showdown 3
Sega Rally 2
Shadow Gunner
Shadowman
Shadows of the Empire
Shanghai Triple Threat
Shellshock
Shogun: Total War
Silent Bomber
Silent Hill
Silhouette Mirage
Silver
Sim City Series
Sims
SiN
Sled Storm
Small Soldiers
Smurfs
Snow Racer 98
Snowboard Kids
Soldier of Fortune
Sonic Adventure
Soul Blade
Soul Calibur
Soul Reaver: Leg of Kain
South Park
South Park Rally
Soviet Strike
Space Channel 5
Space Invaders
Spec Ops: Stealth Patrol
Spectra Core
Speed Devil
Speed Freaks
Spiderman
Spyro 1, 2 & 3
Star Fighter 3000
Star Fox/Lylat Wars
Star Gladiators
Star Ocean 2
Star Trek Series
Star Wars Series
StarCraft
Steel Reign
Street Fighter Series
Street Sk8er 1 & 2
Suikoden
Super Mario Series
Super Robot Spirits
Super Smash Brothers
Supercross 2000
Suzuki Alstare Ext Racing
Swat 3
Sword of the Berserk
Syndicate Wars
Syphon Filter 1 & 2
T - 20
Tachyon: The Fringe
T'ai Fu
Tarzan
Tee Off Golf
Tekken 1, 2 & 3
Tempest X3
Tenchu 1 & 2
Test Drive Series
Tetris
The Curse Of M. Island
The Mummy
The Settlers 3
The Sims
Theme Hospital
Theme Park
Theme Park World
Thief: The Dark Pro
This Is Football
Thrasher: Skate & Dest.
Thrill Kill
Tiberian Sun
Tiger Woods
Time Crisis
TOCA 1, 2 & WTC
Tokyo Extreme Racer
Tokyo Highway Battle
Tomb Raider 1,2,3,4 & 5
Tombi 1 & 2
Tommi Makinen Rally
Tomorrow Never Dies
Tonic Trouble
Tony Hawk's 1 & 2
Top Gear Rally
Total Annihilation
Total Drivin'
Toy Commander
Toy Story 2
Transport Tycoon
Treasures Of The Deep
Trespasser
Trickstyle
Tunnel B1
Turok Series
U - 21
UEFA Champ. League
UEFA Striker
Ultimate Soccer Man. 98
Unreal Tournament
Urban Chaos
V - 22
Vagrant Story
Vampire Hunter D
Vampire:Masq. Red.
Vandal Hearts 1 & 2
Vigilante 8 1 & 2
Virtua Striker 2
Virus
VR Baseball 97
V-Rally Series
W - 23
Wacky Races
War Craft 2
War Games
War Gods
War Hammer Series
Warhawk
Wario Land 1 & 2
Warzone 2100
Wave Race
WCW Series
Wild 9
Wild Arms
Winback: Covert Ops.
Wing Over 2
Wipeout Series
World Cup 98
World League Soccer 98
Worms Series
Wreckin' Crew
Wu Tang: Taste the Pain
WWF Series
X - 24
X - Files
X men vs Street Fighter
X-Com Series
Xena Warrior Princess:
Y - 25
Yoshi's Story
Z - 26
Z
Zelda Series
Zombie Revenge

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WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Games are supposed to be fun. So don't sit there grinding your teeth like a madman, stuck for how to finish a level. Send your problem to the The Masters. Use the address on the opposite page.

HAVOC
0128
100 46 29
149
SABER
COALITION FIGHTER

Starlancer: Blast those Coalition Torp Bombers and rescue the ship

HP 317
HP 307
HP 377
2 Hits 56 Damage
COM
ACT

Grandia 2: Those boss monsters sure can be nasty to beat

STARLANCER

Can you help me get through Mission 8 of *Starlancer*? It's the one where you have to escort the Reliant to Ft Carter for repairs. The Coalition Torp Bombers are really giving me a pasting at the moment. What battle strategies should I be using?
Scott Alba, East Sheen
It's vital you stay as close to the Reliant as possible throughout this mission. When the Coalition ship Krasnaya shows up, the first flurry of torpedoes will be dealt with by the Reliant. The next attack wave is more difficult to dismiss. You'll be faced with four bombers who will each fire four torpedoes and then retreat. Concentrate on taking out the torpedoes before they hit the Reliant, don't get side-tracked into trying to destroy the enemy bombers.

When you've dusted all the torpedoes concentrate your firepower on the Krasnaya's Shield Generator and then destroy the laser turrets. You have to take them out quickly or the Reliant will be blown to smithereens in the meantime. Once the Krasnaya's guns are down your allies will finish off the job while you provide covering fire and mop up any remaining enemy fighters.

ONI

I'm stuck on level 10 because I can't get across the roof where there's a sniper shooting at me from the other side.
Jon Adams, Leicester
All you have to do is jump across, but as you'll know already, it's not as simple as it sounds. You have to get the timing and position of your jump exactly right or you'll never get across. Your best bet is to take a run up to the edge of the roof by double tapping forwards.

When you reach the very edge of the roof press and hold the jump key and don't let it go until you land safely on the other side. If you're still having trouble making the distance you could try pulling off a flip-jump in mid-air. Tricky but effective!

GRANDIA 2

Got any ideas how to beat the Eye of Valmar?
Robin Parker, Barnet
Before you even attempt to battle the Eye of Valmar make sure you're levelled up to around 25. Start by taking out one of the four EyeBall bats that are protecting the main Eye. Kill one of them to prevent the remaining three from smacking you up with their deadly Delta Burst attack. Millenia's Fallen Wings and Roan's Snowball Fight should get rid of the remaining Eye Bats.

Now concentrate on the big eye and the two tendrils on either side. Use Whirlwind Scroll, Fire Scroll and grenades. Ryudo should cast Flying Tenseiken. When HPs start to drop below 650 cast the Alhealer spell. Keep hitting the Eye and Tendrils with Fallen Wings, Crackle, and Mareg's Beast-King Smash. Keep everyone's HP at a high level and raise any fallen party members with Elixir and Valmar's Eye will soon be reduced to gloopy mush.

EVERGRACE

Trandin is a total pain in the bum. What does it take to stop this infuriating little creep pounding me into the ground? Can you advise me on the best weapon to use?
Bob Barker, Liphook
Your best bet is to equip the Majestic Sword and upgrade it to use the Aerial Combo move. Get as close

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computer and video games GUARANTEED WINNERS

As ever, here are the choicest tips and cheats gamedom has to offer. Don't forget, if you've got some useful tips of your own send them in to Easy Money on page 60 to net youself a sweet tenner.

DREAMCAST

■ BANGAI-O
UNLOCK CHEAT MODE: Go to the Name Entry list and select 3 Groundhogs. This will open the Secret Garden Menu in the Options screen. In here, you will now be able to access all 44 levels in this mad old school shooter.

■ CAPCOM VS SNK: MILLENNIUM FIGHT 2000
FIGHT AS EVIL RYU AND EVIL LORI: Beat both SNK and Capcom Grooves in Arcade Mode with Ryu and Lori. You can now buy Evil Ryo (Secret 34) and Evil Lori (Secret 49) in the Secret Shop. They'll cost you 7000vs points each, mind.

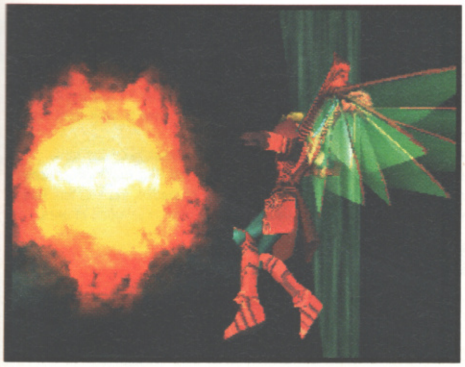
PLAYSTATION

■ HELLO KITTY CUBE FRENZY
BONUS OPTIONS: At the Start screen press Up, Up, Down, Down, Left, Right, Left, Right, Down, Up. A ringing sound will confirm your entry. Now press Start and go to the Main Menu screen where you should see a new '?' Option. Select it to gain access to the bonus options in this bonkers puzzler.

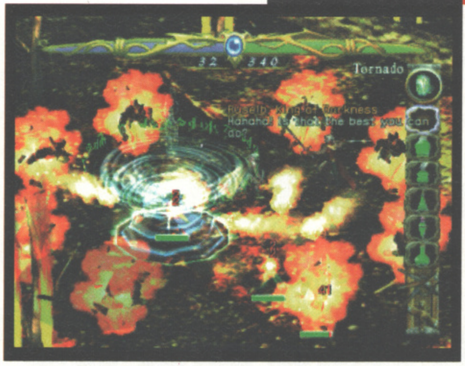
■ JADE COCOON
To get Mugwort Herbs for free, meet Koris in Beetle Forest and train with him. When he asks you to do something, choose any other option apart from Item. You'll get a Herb at the end of each battle.

PLAYSTATION 2

■ RAYMAN 2: REVOLUTION
CHEAT MODE: On any map except the first one select the Options screen and choose Sound. Highlight Mute, then hold down L1 and R1, then press L2, R2, L2, R2, L2,R2. Hey Presto, Cheat Menu.
BABY SOCCER MAP: During gameplay hold down L1 and R1 and press L2, R2, L2, R2, L2, R2.
HIDDEN MULTIPLAYER MAPS: Select the Options screen on the first map. Choose Language and then highlight Voices. Select the Raymanian option, then hold down L1 and R1 and press L2, R2, L2, R2, L2, R2 for three new maps.



Legend Of Dragoon: **How to get your hands on that massive staff**



Record Of Lodoss War: **Learn how to beat scary pyro-man Ruselb**

1P: 25201 1-2
LV. 1

Gunbird 2: **Scrolling shoot 'em ups are not dead, it's official**

as possible to Trandin when he's finished his attacks and unleash the Aerial Combo. Keep your energy level at 100% to cause maximum damage. It should take approximately four Aerial Combos to finish him off.

LEGEND OF DRAGOON

I've reached the Forbidden Land on Disc 3. You know, the part where Meru tries to remove the Dragon Block Staff and wakes up the bad tempered Grand Jewell guardian? Can you help me get past this beast and get my hands on the Staff?
Michelle Cartwright, Plymouth

Before fighting Grand Jewell your levels should be at least 45, and preferably around 50. As for the battle itself, the key to victory is to be aware that if any of your party go Dragoon they will be hit for major damage by Grand Jewell. Meru's Rainbow Breath and Dart's Final Burst can both be quite effective so it's worth risking going Dragoon at least once, but make sure you have plenty of Healing Breeze to restore health.

Don't forget to use Speed Up on Dart so he can unleash a succession of Final Bursts. Provided your levels are high enough and you've mastered as many Additions as possible you should be able to polish off the Guardian without too much bother.

LEGEND OF ZELDA: MAJORA'S MASK

Can you tell me how I can buy different maps from Tingle? So far I've only been able to get the Clock Town map and the Woodfall map from him.
June Reynolds, Kettering

To get new maps from strange bouncing man Mr Tingle you have to visit him in different places. To get the Snowhead map look for Tingle between Termina Field and the Southern Swamp. To get the Milk Road map look for Tingle on Snowhead and also between Mountain Village and Goron village. If you want to get the map for Great Bay visit him on Milk Road. Finally go to Great Bay to buy the Ikana Canyon Map.

RECORD OF LODOSS WAR

Any advice on slicing the remorseless Ruselb, King of Darkness, as I can never quite manage to finish him off? Do I need to do anymore levelling up as I am currently at 13?
Dungeon Master, York

Level 13 should be fine to beat Ruselb. When you first go up to talk to him, he'll let rip with some crazy pyrotechnics that you should do your best to avoid as it's very damaging to your party. When he sends out his minions, carve them up with the double-handed sword.

Before you battle big Ruselb himself replace the double-handed sword with the sword that has been cursed by Hell, making sure to transfer all Ancients over to the cursed sword. With this satanic scimitar you should then be able to make mincemeat of Ruselb and take his head as a trophy. Sweet.

SUMMONER

I've reached the end of the game and have found myself face-to-face with the Demon of Darkness. Just when I'm getting ready to give him a good pasting, he flies away and I can't reach him. Please tell me how to beat him.
Jon Adams, Leicester

You must've bought an imported copy of this to be stuck before the game even releases here in the UK. Anyway, the US and UK codes are so similar, we can still help you out, and you certainly deserve a break for spending so much dosh on an import. Firstly pummel the Demon as hard as you can while he's still on the altar. When he flies away summon the Celestial Samurai and cast Protect on the party.

Now change your character to Fleece. Go up the stairs and fight the Knights. Then using Jakhar head for the balcony and attack the Demon. When the Demon returns to the altar follow him and attack again. Make sure you use Rosalind to cast Protect and Vitalise throughout the Boss battle to keep everyone healthy.

When you've whooped the Demon's ass sufficiently he'll escape to the balcony. This is your cue to head with Jakhar to the opposite balcony and fight yet more Knights. Now change to Celestial Samurai or Joseph and attack the Demon on the balcony. When he runs for the altar again follow him and keep on attacking with your two free characters (Fleece should still be fighting the Knights and Rosalind should healing the party).

Now that you have the Demon trapped he will start to change form so it's vital to keep continuously healing, protecting and attacking. It's a long, hard struggle, but you've managed to get this far so you should have the necessary gaming chops to survive the pace.

GUNBIRD 2

I've heard that there are two more playable characters in this game. How do I unlock them?
Ivan Bridge, Hayes

Scrolling shoot 'em ups need plenty of gimics to make them interesting, don't they? To unlock Morrigan go to the Character Selection screen, select the '?' Option and then press Up. To unlock Ain press Down instead of up. This should liven things up and prevent you from falling asleep at the console.

GAMEBOY

■ 102 DALMATIONS: PUPPIES TO THE RESCUE

GARAGE LEVEL: Enter Bone, Bone, Pawprint, Tank to unlock the Garage level.

■ STAR WARS EPISODE 1: OBI-WAN'S ADVENTURES

LEVEL SELECT PASSWORDS

LEVEL	PASSWORD
2	BQVQK
3	WNLRM
4	SDGNK
5	CNLML
6	BXGTG
7	QSRVJ
8	TKGJZ
9	LPZCP

PC CD-ROM

■ AIRLINE TYCOON

All the following codes should be entered during gameplay. Now you can act like a real tycoon and cheat your way to instant wealth.

CODE	WHAT YOU GET
SHOWALL	All flights visible
MENTAT	All helpers active
NODEBTS	Eliminate all debts
EXPANDER	Expand airport
FAMOUS	Improve your reputation
DONALDTRUMP	Get more cash
CROWD	More people
NOTEPAD	Think pad
RUNNINGMAN	Faster people
ATMISSALL	Level select
WINNING	Level skip

NINTENDO 64

■ POKEMON SNAP

TWO PIKACHUS: To get a double-helping of yellow-bellied cuteness look for the long grass area on the left of the Beach level. Throw Apples to chase Scyther out of the grass and you should be face to face with two Pickachus just begging to be photographed.

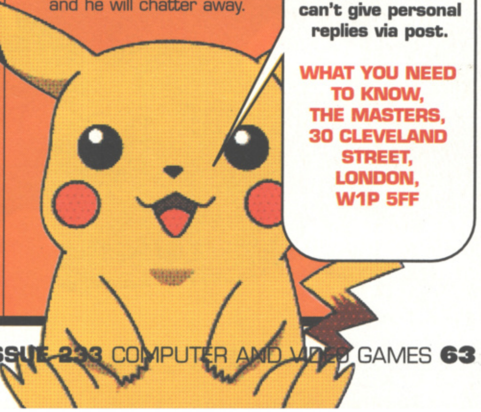
CANDID ARTICUNO SHOT: After saving Pikachu from Zubat play the flute to reveal Articuno. Then look behind you for a cool photo opportunity with Pikachu giving Articuno a piggy (or should that be Pikky) back ride!

■ POKEMON STADIUM

CHATTY PIKACHU: Transfer a hand-reared Pika from GB *Pokémon Yellow* to your team and he will chatter away.

Send all your questions to our address below. We'll print as many answers as we can, but we can't give personal replies via post.

**WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW,
THE MASTERS,
30 CLEVELAND STREET,
LONDON,
W1P 5FF**



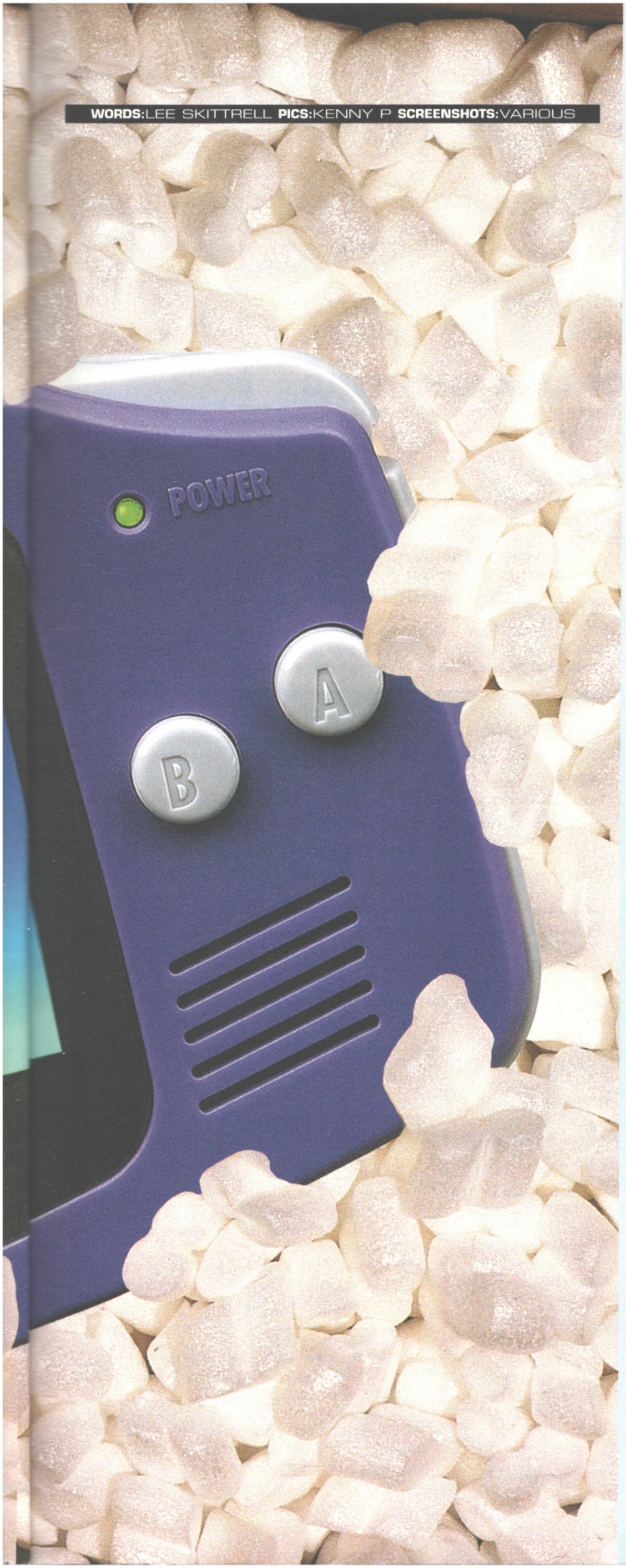
GAME BOY IN ADVANCE

GBA is here. Can't wait? You don't have to – here's how

It's the most desirable import console ever. It'll play catridges from all regions. It'll even play your old GBC games. It's the ultimate in handheld fun. It's due out in Japan round about NOW, America on June 11 and in Europe... well, an announcement is imminent. But we'll probably have to wait until way into the Summer, maybe even September.

So, if you can't wait for the UK release and simply must have one now, we're here to show you how best to order an imported GBA today so you can indulge in awesome handheld pleasure in a matter of weeks, not months. And as if that wasn't enough, we'll even give you the chance to win one of ours.

EXT.
Nintendo
GAME BOY
Nintendo
GAME BOY ADVANCE
START
SELECT


WORDS:LEE SKITTRELL **PICS:**KENNY P **SCREENSHOTS:**VARIOUS

WHY YOU SHOULD BE EXCITED

Japanese GBA players will be blessed with over 20 launch games, but the most highly anticipated GBA title, *Mario Kart Advance*, is sadly not among them. Still, almost every genre is catered for in the meaty launch line-up, from platformers to sports games. Every player should be able to find something to suit their gaming palette.

If you're thinking of stocking up on Jap games, you should bear in mind that text heavy titles like RPGs and strategy games will be mostly unplayable, unless you know your Japanese. You'll probably fare much better with platformers and racers. Here's a rundown of the most popular titles available at launch from your trusty importer. If they make it here at all, the game names are likely to change for the UK release.

F-ZERO
This hit SNES super-fast sci-fi racer is a must-have GBA launch game

KURU KURU KURURIN
Crazy puzzle action with a spinning rod! Not as cool as, say, *Tetris* but nicely odd

PINOBEE QUEST OF THE HEART
Beautiful platformer with insect heroes and a unique way to move around levels

NAPOLEON
Strategy and war in the palm of your hand! One of the first handheld RTS's

MARIO ADVANCE
A rejigged *Super Mario Bros 2* from the NES – some say a controversial choice

KONAMI WAI WAI RACING
A great racing alternative to *Mario Kart Advance* with Goemon and pals

POWER PRO BASEBALL
Pretty-looking baseball sim that should probably be playable in spite of Jap text

MAGICAL VACATION
This is a gorgeous sprite-filled RPG that should satsify adventure-hungry players

J-LEAGUE SOCCER
Footy on your GBA with authentic Jap teams. No Beckham, but still good

ADVANCED GT RACING
Few details available on this but looks like a sort of *Gran Turismo* wannabe. Cool

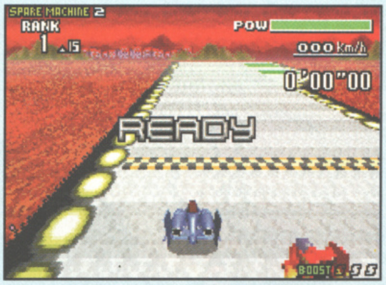
WINNING POST HORSE RACING
The Jap craze for horse-racing games extends to Nintendo's new handheld

ROCKMAN EXE BATTLE
Has Mega Man had his day? Course not, this platformer looks ace

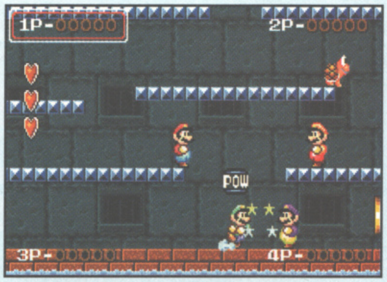
CASTLEVANIA: CIRCLE OF THE MOON
CastleVania games are consistently good and the 2D ones are the very best

TWEETY AND THE MAGICAL JEWEL
Looney Tunes action-puzzler featuring everybody's favourite canary

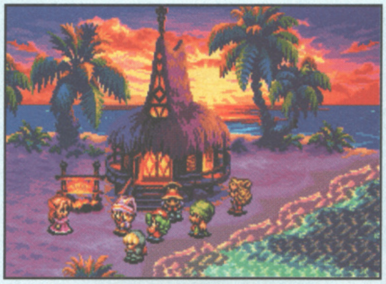
DORAEMON
Heavily Jap-tinged cartoon adventure. Big in Japan but limited appeal to UK

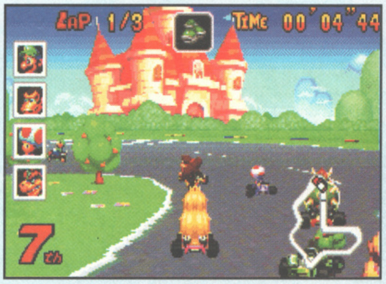


Slick, sexy and super-fast. *F-Zero* is one of the first must-have games for GBA. Four-player link-up? Oh mercy!



Multiple characters and new moves for platform freaks in *Mario Advance*. There's even two-player arcade action


RPG larks a-plenty in *Magical Vacation* – watch that Japanese text though. We hope this gets a UK release



It's not a launch game, but *Mario Kart Advance* will be well worth saving your pennies for. Truly gob-smacking

SHOP 'TIL YOU DROP

There's a handful of methods to get hold of an import Game Boy Advance, and while some are more surefire than others, they'll all result in a shopping experience that's a bit different from moping around your local Woolies. We've checked out a selection of import shops, online retailers and mail order firms.

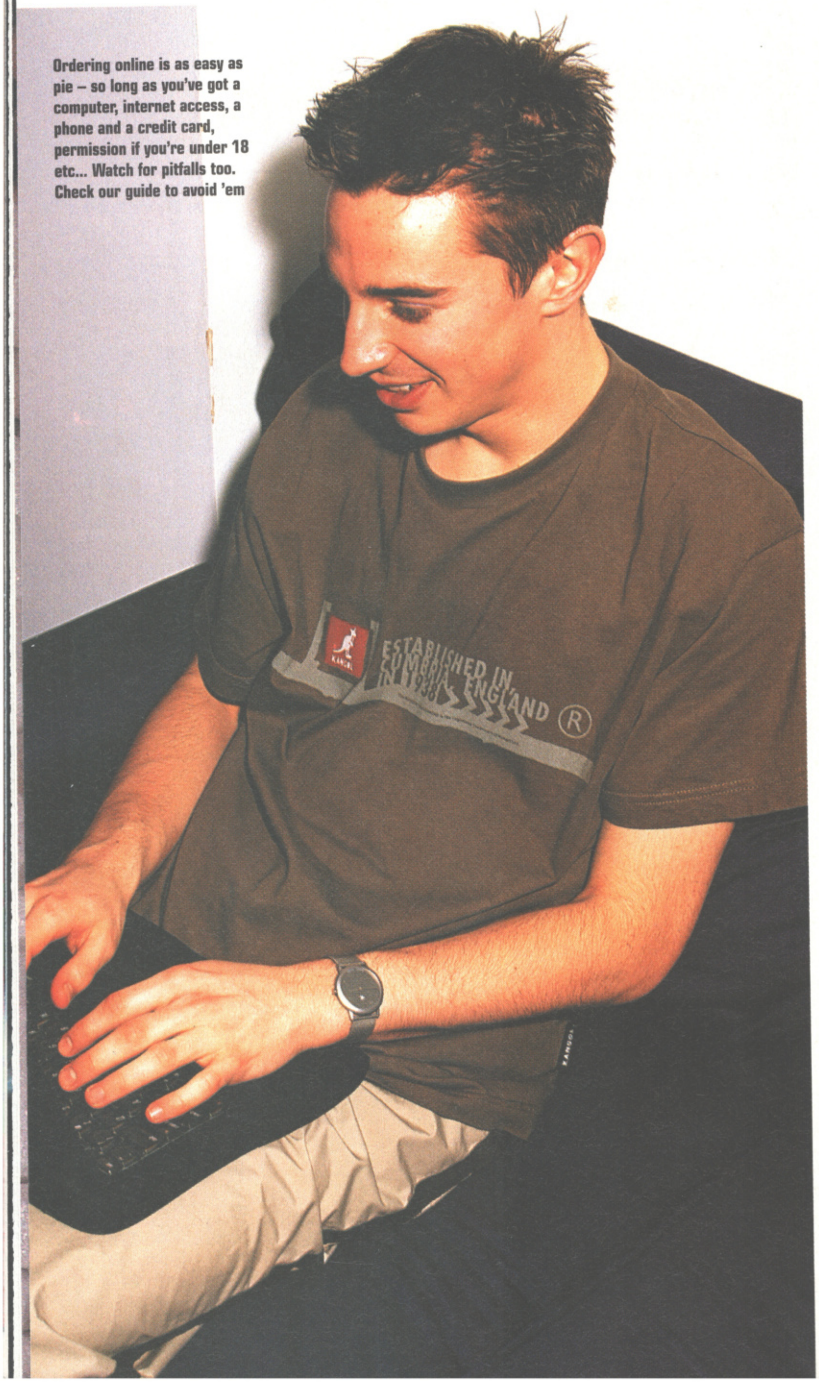
JUST SO YOU KNOW...

Every retailer we spoke to wanted to stress the prices quoted were for Game Boy Advance hardware and hardware bundles on sale IMMEDIATELY AFTER launch only. It's understandable from a business point of view that importers would want to exploit the impossibly high demand for getting a GBA in the days and weeks after launch. That's why the prices are higher now than they will be in say, three months' time. But if you think back to the PlayStation 2 launch, you'll remember how some importers were asking over a grand for units. GBAs will be flying off shelves for a much lower price.

ADD-ONS CONFUSION

Nintendo in the UK is keeping very tight-lipped about the range of GBA peripherals that will be available for the Jap launch, let alone the final details of the US and UK product range. The third-party add-on distributors we spoke to all claimed they would be fully supporting GBA with A/C adapters, battery packs and four-way link cables for definite, with other more mysterious and exciting accessories to follow shortly after launch.

We found that only one of our GBA importers, gamesxone.com, could offer any kind of official Jap add-ons at launch and these were very expensive. And nobody seemed to know anything about the mysterious new GBA Light Boy, pictures of which have been floating around on the internet in recent weeks. Given that GBA will play old GB games, it's highly likely that your old peripherals like link cables and illumination units will work, but there's no absolute guarantee. And of course, original link-cables will only allow for two-player games, and not the four-player extravaganzas we all want.



Ordering online is as easy as pie – so long as you've got a computer, internet access, a phone and a credit card, permission if you're under 18 etc... Watch for pitfalls too. Check our guide to avoid 'em

ONLINE SHOPPING

There are loads of online shopping sites but we struggled to find many that were importing and selling GBAs specifically for the UK. Buying online can be a minefield and you need a credit card. Use your common sense – if anything seems dodgy to you, don't do it.

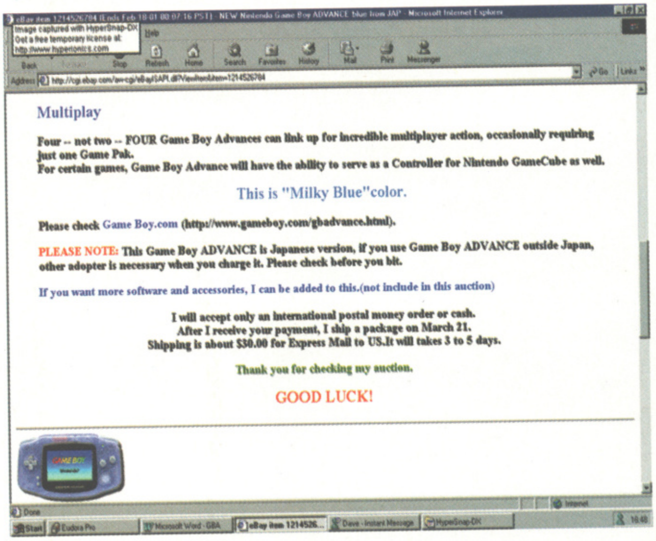
GOOD FOR:

A lazy bugger's dream: sit on your arse and surf for treats. It's relatively easy to find rare games from all over the world, and buying them with a credit card and having them delivered is pretty straightforward, providing you're buying from a trustworthy site.

You'll often feel part of a cool 'underground' network of hardcore gamers too when looking for rare stuff and games newsgroups can produce unlikely new friendships. Aww, bless.

BAD FOR:

Credit card worries abound when buying online. Make sure the site offers secure online transactions (look for a mention of this in the small print on the site). It's also very difficult to trace lost packages in some cases, as there is no human point of contact.



eBay item 1214526784 (Ends Feb-18-01 00:07:16 PST) - NEW Nintendo Game Boy ADVANCE blue from JAP - Microsoft Internet Explorer
Image captured with HyperSnap-DX
Get a free temporary license at:
http://www.hyperionics.com
Help
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eBay item 1214526...
Dave - Instant Message
HyperSnap-DX
16:48

Multiplay

Four -- not two -- FOUR Game Boy Advances can link up for incredible multiplayer action, occasionally requiring just one Game Pak.
For certain games, Game Boy Advance will have the ability to serve as a Controller for Nintendo GameCube as well.

This is "Milky Blue"color.

Please check Game Boy.com (http://www.gameboy.com/gbadvance.html).

PLEASE NOTE: This Game Boy ADVANCE is Japanese version, if you use Game Boy ADVANCE outside Japan, other adopter is necessary when you charge it. Please check before you bit.

If you want more software and accessories, I can be added to this.(not include in this auction)

I will accept only an international postal money order or cash.
After I receive your payment, I ship a package on March 21.
Shipping is about $30.00 for Express Mail to US.It will takes 3 to 5 days.

Thank you for checking my auction.

GOOD LUCK!

www.gamesxone.com
PRICE: £180 for GBA, £280 for bundle
GAMES: £55 each

GAMESXONE:

GBAs available within week of launch and one of the few importers offering both stand-alone units and the awesome GBA bundles, featuring *CastleVania*, *Mario Advance* and *F-Zero*.

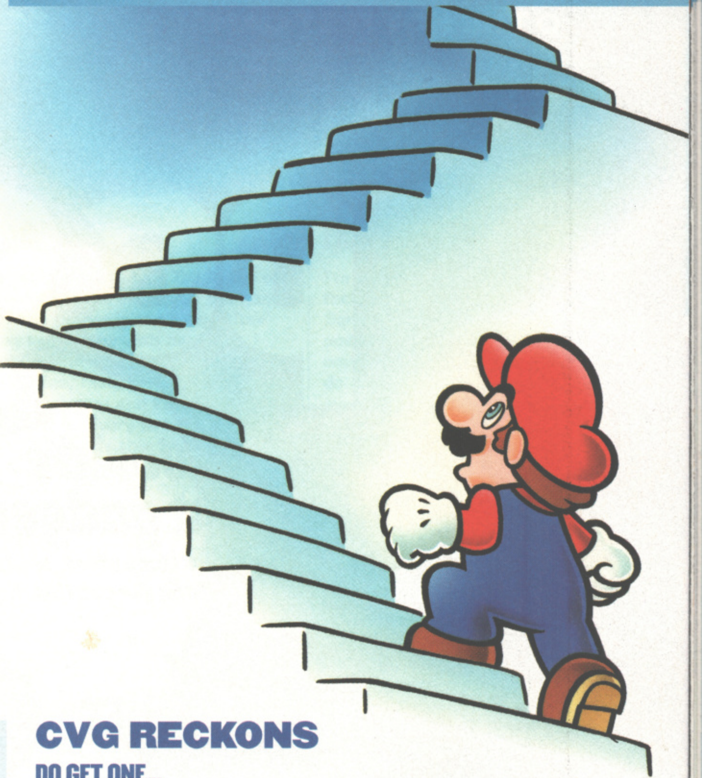
The site is also advertising offical GBA peripherals like the four-player link cable for £30, and a rechargeable battery unit for a whopping £65. Ouch.

www.ebay.com
PRICE: $120 for stand-alone GBA
GAMES: no games

EBAY:

Check the screen above – it's a Japanese guy wanting to make a quick buck by buying GBAs and sending them out after receiving your dollars.

We really want to believe this guy hopes to spread GBA-joy across the world, but he's had no bids so far. Buying on a Net auction site could be fine, but the very nature of the site means high demand could also mean high prices.



UK MAIL ORDER

Flick to the back of this very issue of CVG and you'll find a selection of reputable Mail Order companies to call up. Most will accept payment by cheque as well as credit cards but remember, NEVER send actual money in the post.

GOOD FOR:

You feel part of a club and who *doesn't* enjoy getting parcels in the post? Regular catalogues sent to your door.

BAD FOR:

Membership fees can sometimes be high and waiting 28 days for delivery is not for the impatient.

Cyber Net
0208 789 7196
www.cvge.co.uk
PRICE: £TBC, only selling GBA bundles at launch
GAMES: around £50

CYBER NET:

GBAs available day after launch but only in three-game bundles (*F-Zero, CastleVania, Mario Advance*). Trade price (to other stockists) is £220 so likely to be considerably more to the average punter

King Cat Entertainment
0208 767 1101
sales@kingcat.co.uk
PRICE: £130-£140 for stand-alone GBA to members
GAMES: Around £40 each

KING CAT ENTERTAINMENT:

Limited stock available in week after launch. Very friendly sales staff on phone, willing to explain whole pre-order system and allay any fears you might have. You have to be a member though.

IMPORT STORES

Most cites and big towns have at least one games import store lurking in a back street. You sometimes have to join up as a member but once you do, you can shop against a backdrop of neon strip lighting and nasty drum 'n' bass.

GOOD FOR:

Get games months before UK release and the staff know more about games than your average chain store schmoe.

BAD FOR:

Scary pricing (£70 for US FFIX is some shops!), occasionally, er, 'elitist' staff.

VIDEO GAME CENTRE
870 Wimborne Road
Moordown
Bournemouth
Tel: 01202 527314
PRICE: £149.99 for console
GAMES: £49.99 each

CEX games
Corporation Street
Birmingham
B4 6XS
Tel: 01212 002330
PRICE: £170-£250 console
GAMES: From £45 each

VIDEO GAMES CENTRE:

Very limited stock (only 20-25 units) but are promised to be available from the day after launch, along with a big selection of launch games. We've ordered our GBAs from these guys so you know you can trust 'em to deliver

COMPUTER EXCHANGE:

Very limited stock spread throughout UKs CEX stores and online too. Available two-three days after launch with games, but no final word on what titles will be available as yet. Put those calls in early, folks...

CVG RECKONS

DO GET ONE...

Face it: owning a Game Boy Advance just after it launches in its home country will score you serious points with your gamesplaying mates. That's enough to make a purchase worthwhile all by itself, plus you'll get to play some fantastic games first as well as seeing games that may never make it to our shores. The prospect of the entire SNES back catalogue being converted to your handheld, along with Sega's *Sonic* and *Chu-Chu* games heading to GBA, is something dedicated gameheads will find impossible to resist.

DON'T GET ONE...

Look at it this way: six months or so is not all that long to wait for a GBA and you're far more likely to find one in the shops. Your games will be in English (always a bonus), it won't cost you the Earth and you'll have proper warranties in case things go wrong.

IT'S YOUR CHOICE

Importing a GBA to play right now is so tempting that all of us at CVG have been checking our bank accounts to see if we can squeeze one in. But it ultimately comes down to how hardcore you are.

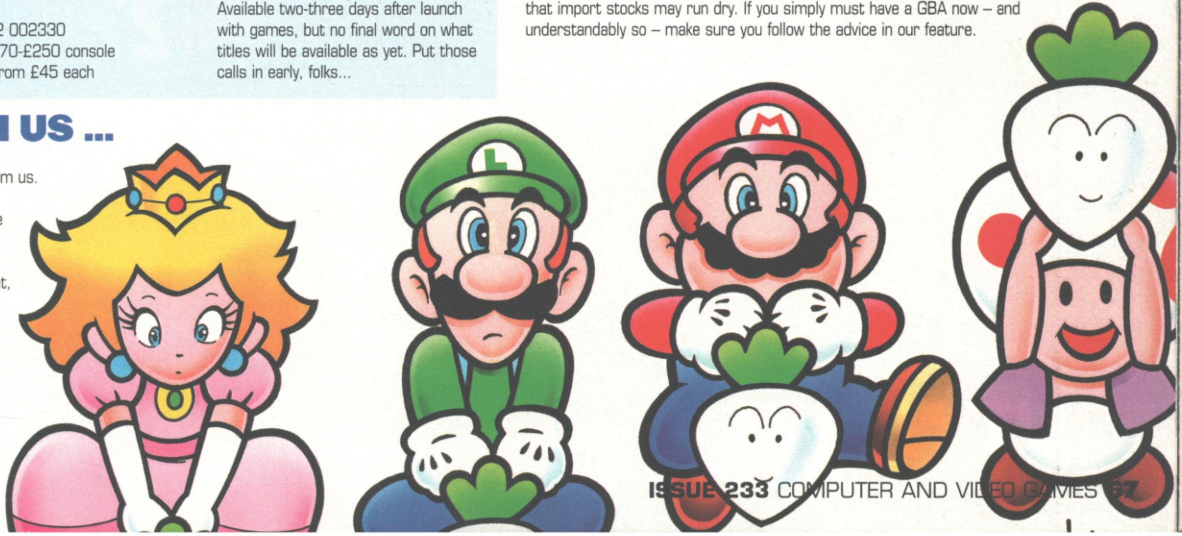
The lure of awesome handheld Nintendo games will be too much for you to resist, but others may worry about the compatibility issues and the high price and choose to wait and see how the import situation develops. The trouble with waiting, of course, is that import stocks may run dry. If you simply must have a GBA now – and understandably so – make sure you follow the advice in our feature.

TAKE IT FROM US ...

Or rather take our Game Boy Advance from us. You can win one of the very first import GBAs to arrive in the UK! Just answer the question and send to: 'Gimme that GBA now Compo', Computer and Videogames, Dennis Publishing Ltd, 30 Cleveland Street, London, W1P 5FF.

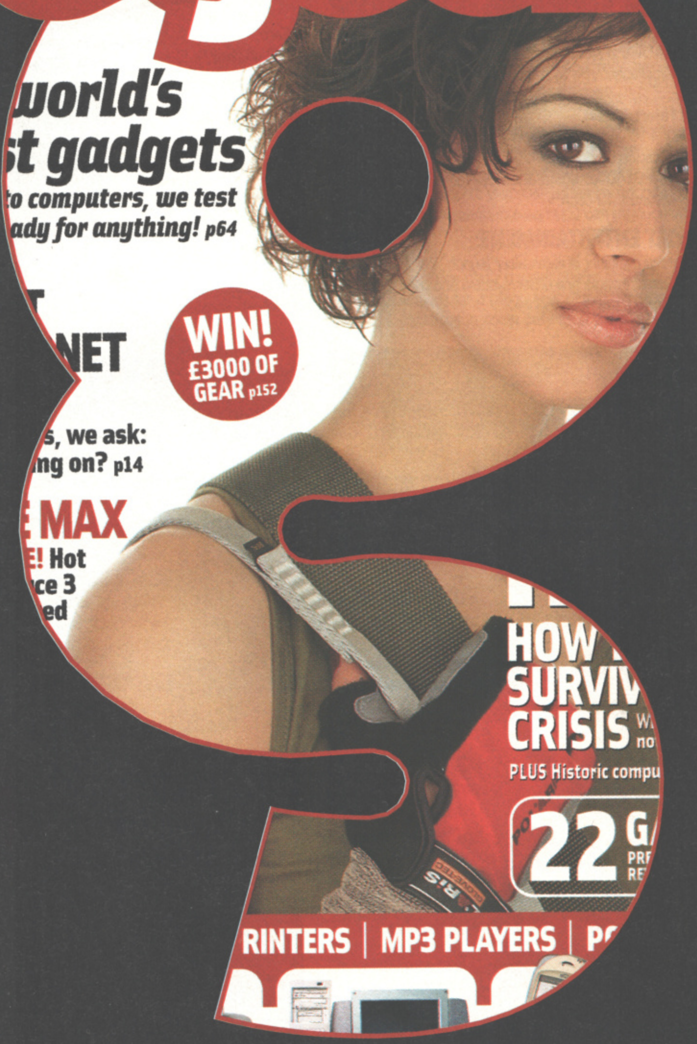
Q: *Mario Advance* is a new version of which classic *Mario* game?

A: *Super Mario Land*
B: *Super Mario Bros 2*
C: *Super Mario in Septic Tank Land*



○ THE HOTTEST GAMES ○ THE COOLEST KIT ○ THE WACKIEST WEBSITES

pcgear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YOUR LETTERS

Got something to say? Send your letters to: Mailbag, Computer and Video Games, 30 Cleveland Street, London W1P 5FF. Or email us at: mailbag.cvg@dennis.co.uk

STAR LETTER

HEAVYWEIGHT PANTS

Couldn't believe my eyes when I saw Johnny winning at *HBO Boxing* one-handed while not looking at the telly and with just one hand. However, awarding it a one-star rating is the ultimate put-down, and to be totally happy that your score is fair and accurate, I've devised the following methods of play for Johnny to try out. If he can still win while playing like that, then *HBO* truly is Heavyweight Pants of the Gaming World:

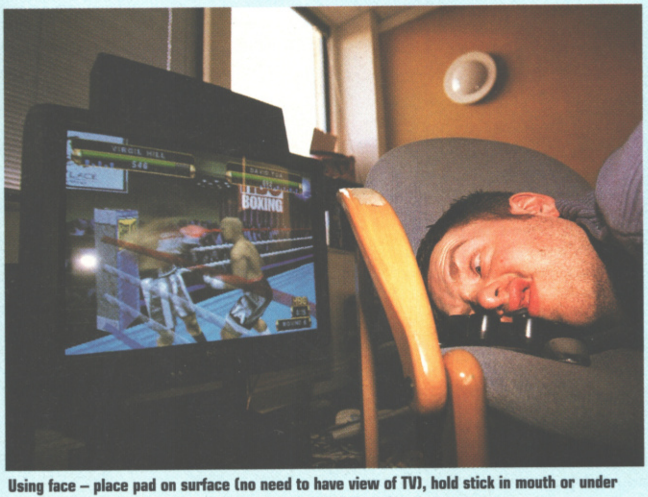
1/ While upside down
2/ With a dance mat
3/ While only using his face

Ray Box, Isle of Mann

Challenges accepted. Challenges completed. CVG rating utterly vindicated. According to Acclaim, *HBO Boxing* should be in the shops now. Strangely, a bunch of the big games chains aren't planning to stock it. Wonder why?

Upside down – A quick knockout is vital here before too much blood rushes to your head and you pass out and lose on a technicality

Dance mat – stand on two buttons and don't move. You can win without moving a muscle in your body for the entire bout



Using face – place pad on surface (no need to have view of TV), hold stick in mouth or under chin and hit button with nose. Straightforward technique but nose gets sore

PHOTOGRAPHY: KENNY P

OI! RACER

I bought CVG 231 and *Toy Racer* on Dreamcast. Before I played the game I read the review in the mag. After playing two-player with my mate, I thought it wasn't a bad game. Online, it was a fine, fast, smooth, no lag multiplayer game and I'm more than happy with it. Every Dreamcast owner should buy this for £4.99.

D Gresty, Blackpool

We stand by our review score. But your email prompted us to revisit *Toy Racer* online, and guess what...? We still think it's pap. We accept they've pretty much sorted the lag issue and it is quite smooth, but we were assured when we reviewed it that code was finished and online was fully functional. Either way, *Toy Racer* still sucks, even at that price.

GOTTA...EMAIL...Y'ALL

In issue 230 you had a giant feature of *Pokémon Gold* and *Silver*. You are right. It is simply unputdownable. Every second counts. I got it for £40 and it was worth it.

Stephen Domican, Dublin

Unputdownable... except when you're emailing CVG though, eh?!

THE VMU DODO

It seems almost every year a new console is written off with only a few people sad about it. However, the latest machine for this to happen to is one nobody seems to have noticed – the VMU. It started off great, full of promise of a million and one features which... haven't been thought up yet. OK, so *Sonic* had a mini game, but for everything else it shows us the game's logo or tells you your high score (stuff which comes up on the screen anyway).

As a result, no-one buys those four quid batteries anymore and no more are kids fighting with Chao in the playground. In fact, the only way it is remembered nowadays is as that sad and pathetic bleep when you turn on the console (sob).

James Keane, via email

A few DC games have tried to make more use of the VMU, but we'd agree they've hardly been pushing back the boundaries of videogames.

I HATE BUFFY

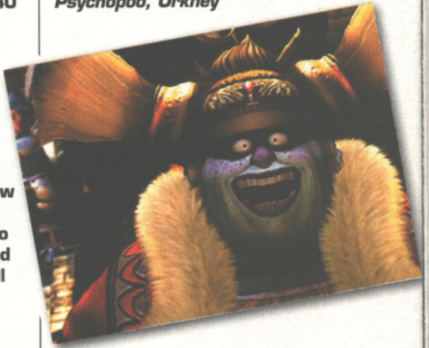
I'm an avid *Final Fantasy* gamer. In fact, I like pretty much all things Square: TVs (they show Buffy), posters (they show Buffy), and of course, Squaresoft, which is yet to do anything Buffy related, but I'm sure they'll see the error of their ways. I heard a while ago that Square was holding a vote to see which next-gen console the public would like to see them developing for.

The next-gen battle could well turn out to be a closely fought contest, and there's a strong possibility that Squaresoft's presence could sway my purchase. Though Buffy's presence would be even more of an incentive, especially if she was naked, covered in treacle... (sordid rant edited out).

So anyway, you gotta tell me: will Square and my favourite videogaming heroes be staying with Sony, returning to Nintendo or joining forces with Microsoft?

PS Any news on Buffy videogames?

Psychopoo, Orkney



You should maybe see a shrink about your Buffy obsession, 'Poo. Meanwhile, here's some soothing games info to calm you down. Square is still in discussions with Microsoft about developing for Xbox, but we reckon if a deal is signed it'll allow it Square to make games for both platforms. As for GameCube – last thing we heard Nintendo vowed Square would never develop for its systems again. On the Buffy front... it's not clear what will happened to the PC/DC/PS version underway as Fox Interactive has pulled out of publishing. Watch this space.

> "Buffy would be an incentive if she was naked and covered in treacle" **Psychopoo, Orkney**

YOUR LETTERS

"I was playing FIFA 2001 when two ants crawled out of the console" **Anon, Cheshire**

PERMANENT RESIDENT

I'm trying to get a large picture of the design on the back of Claire Redfield's pink jacket in *Resident Evil 2*. The picture is of an angel dropping an atomic bomb and says 'Made In Heaven'. I want to get a tattoo of this on my back because I think it would look ace. I've already looked everywhere and I can't find a decent picture of it. If you do find a picture, it has to be pretty big – at least A4 – 'cos it has to go across my back.
Richard Foames, via email
You mean *this* picture?

ANTS IN YER PANTS

I was round a friend's house playing *FIFA 2001* on his PlayStation. I was Man U and he was Liverpool. I scored straight away with Beckham, but then Cole scored and two ants just crawled out of the console. We thought nothing more of it, but then Cole scored again and two more ants came out. This carried on for four more goals scored only by Cole.
PS. Stop giving Johnny such a hard time over the way he dresses. So what if he wants to be a woman.
Anon, Cheshire
A very strange story indeed – Cole scoring six times is almost unbelievable.

MICRO SOFTIE

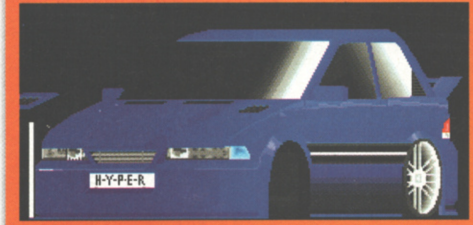
I've just seen a picture of Xbox. It looks as if it is a cross between PS2 and Dreamcast. Isn't this just a way of getting attention by taking the top two consoles' ideas? I've heard Xbox games from any country can be played on any console, meaning we can all enjoy import games. Good luck Microsoft – this looks as if it will be the best of the next-gen consoles. Just don't leave me with a big hole in my pocket.
Adam Skipper, Ipswich

BARE FACED BLACKMAIL

I need *Grand Theft Auto 2* and *ISS Pro Evolution*. My mum won't get me these games so will you send them to me? If you don't, I won't read your magazine ever again. I had these two games but they were stolen.
Name and address not supplied
Dear Mr Outrageous Blagger, we'd only be too happy to supply said games in exchange for half a dozen shiny red Ferraris, a one-year round-the-world trip with all expenses paid, a tub of chocolate chip ice cream the size of Belgium and one super-soft coffin cushion (red) for Les. Sound like a fair exchange? Plus it would help if you sent your address.

ROAD RAGE

***Driver 2* – what were the creators thinking? If I bought the kind of wireframe/3D model packages the developers used to make the game, I would make much sexier cars. If I got the chance to make a game, I'd make it deep, original and fun. Here's something I came up with myself.**
Dillon Finn
Looking at your picture we have to say we're mighty impressed. But good effort though it is, don't you think your car might look kind of out of place in a game set in the 70s...



The Hyper from Dillon Finn. Some front wheels would be nice

BOSSI BASHI

What is it about games that you invariably have to fight the big boss in two or three guises before it's game over? Ever since Carrie's hand came through the ground at the end of the movie, horror flicks all do some kind of 'you thought it's all over but it's not' crap. Games designers have obviously taken it on board big time, producing increasingly elaborate 'final' conflicts, and I'm sick of them.
R McVie, Fife

CLASS SNORE

Don't you think gaming is getting static, endlessly repetitive and is in a state of decay? *Tenchu 3* on PS2 – yawns of excitement all round. Videogames are going to become marginalised, just like comic books.
Sir Sloane, address withheld
We don't agree. But hey, we're just plebs, so what do we know? And what does marginalised mean, Sir?

COVER UP

I've one complaint about Issue 232, Fear Effect 2! I'm a civilised guy, no pornography, an anti-pervert. But the images in that were TOO MUCH!
Jawaid Muttaqi, via email
Anyone else agree?

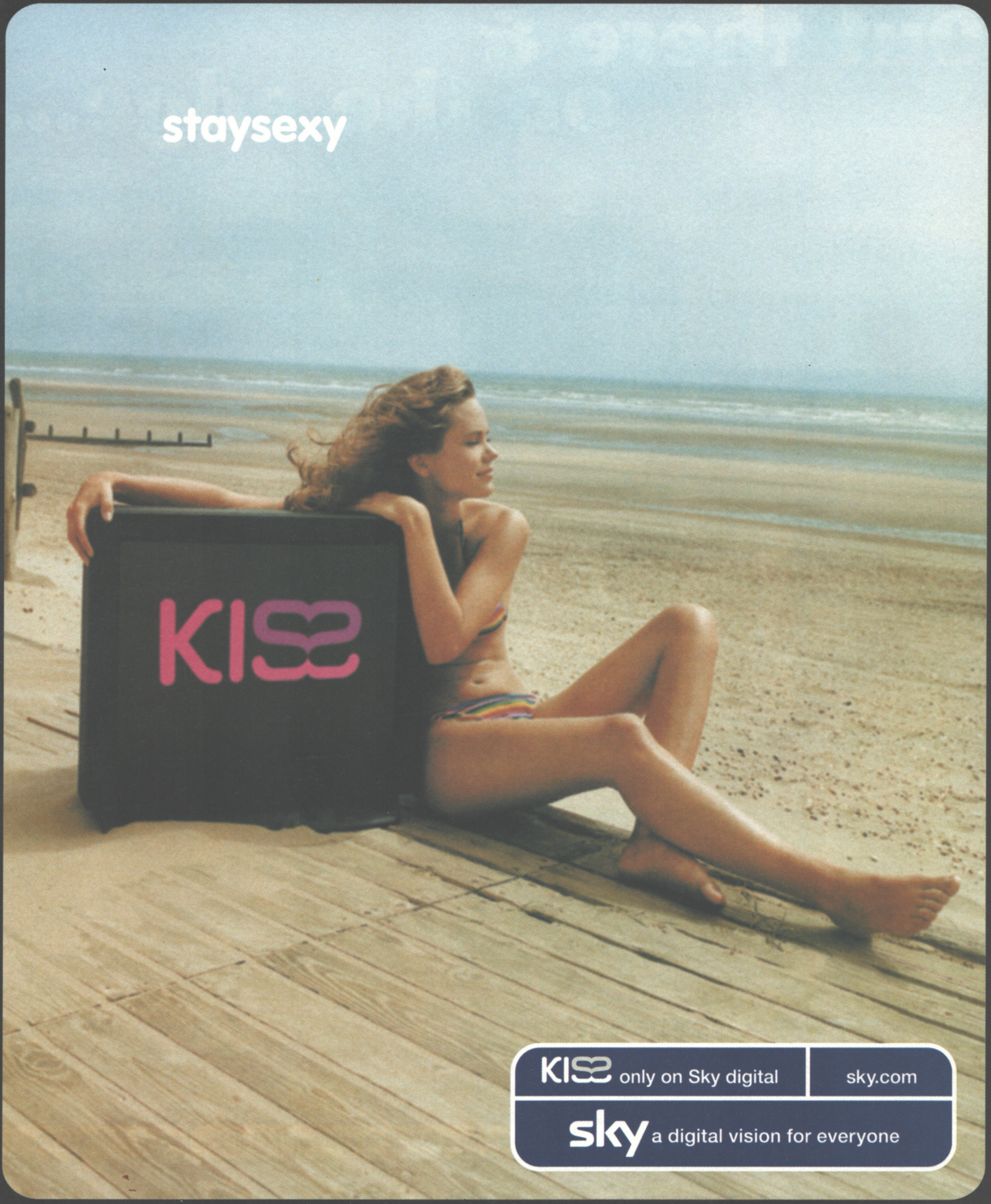
DC IS DEAD. LONG LIVE SEGA!

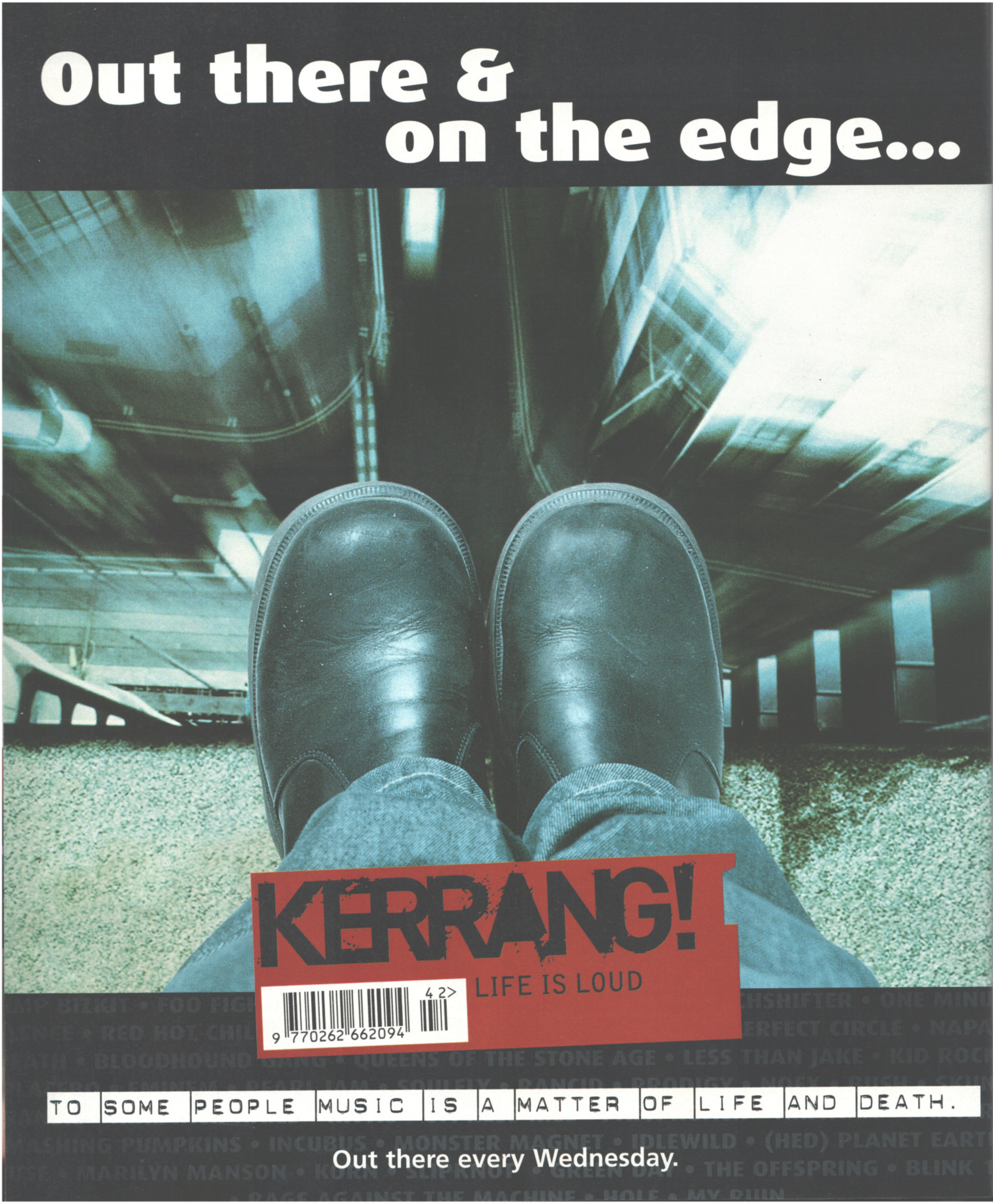
When I found out that DC was to cease production and Sega is to concentrate on making games only, I thought Sega had disappointed its loyal fans again. But then I looked at it from a financial view and agree what it has done is right to save the company. Now we can all have gaming unity as Sega will live on and become King of Games Developers through the PS2 and GBA. I thought the PS2 line-up has been pretty poo. Can you imagine Sonic on PS2? And soon I predict Sega will go multi-format like Capcom – Xbox will take them on board. One things is for certain – Sega is going to live on!
KM Liu, Doncaster
We can't tell you how gutted we are at CVG that DC production is to finish about now. But yes, at least Sega developing on other formats softens the blow.

WHO WROTE TO MAILBAG THIS MONTH

Martin Jackson, via email; Bob, via email; Geoffrey Dodd, Cumbria; Sam Baldwin, Kent; Kat, via email; Xed Terracon, Estonia; Kiran Ghanty, Wimbledon; Calvin Chu, via email; Dan Iddeson, via email; Alasdair Carson, via email; Tony Warren, via email; Daniel Kilfoyle, Manchester; James Morgan, London; Cliff Malinder, London; Lee Waite; Adan Whiting, Nottingham; Malcolm Chalmers, York; Andy Beech, Birmingham; Gareth Barry, Co Cork; Thomas Charnock, Lancs; Rhodri Morgan, Dinas Powys; Imran Bepari, no address supplied; Roy He, no address supplied; Ryan Somers, Stevenage; Lisa Worsford, Co. Down; Ashley Roberts, no address supplied; Thomas Curley, Batley.

"Tenchu 3 on PS2: yawns of excitement all round" **Sir Sloane, address withheld**


staysexy
KISS
KISS only on Sky digital
sky.com
sky a digital vision for everyone


Out there &
on the edge...
KERRANG!
LIFE IS LOUD
4 2>
9 770262 662094
TO SOME PEOPLE MUSIC IS A MATTER OF LIFE AND DEATH.
Out there every Wednesday.
BLOODHOUND GANG • QUEENS OF THE STONE AGE • LESS THAN JAKE
INCUBUS • MONSTER MAGNET • IDLEWILD • (HED) PLANET EARTH
MARILYN MANSON • KORN • SLIPKNOT • GREEN DAY • THE OFFSPRING
RAGE AGAINST THE MACHINE • HOLE • MY RUIN

The world's first and best games mag brings you reviews you can trust

REVIEWS

computer and video Games ★★★★★

WHAT'S IMPORTANT

The Computer and Video Games Five-Star Award is your guarantee of a great game. When you see the logo, it's like having an informed best mate recommend you a game.

HONEST Regardless of hype, reputation or advertising, if it's a great game we'll say so and if it's poor, we'll tell you the truth.

FAIR We're not biased. A good game is a good game, regardless of format or who has made it.

THOROUGH We play games longer and harder than anyone else.

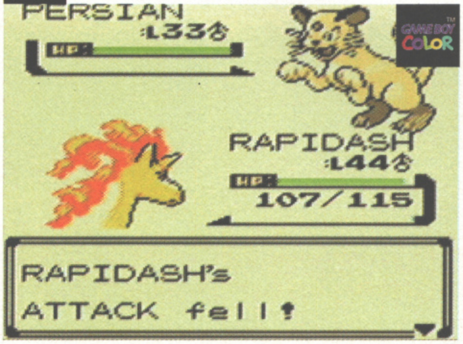
KNOWLEDGE Our writers are all experts, have years of experience and know what makes a cracking game.

Any game that earns Computer and Video Games' Five-Star Award is truly exceptional. It'll do more than just look good and play well, it will rank with the most enjoyable and rewarding games in existence on that format.

74 ZONE OF ENDERS

PS2
ENEMY 3
SQUADS 1
SURVIVOR 100.0
Lv. 4
Lv. 1
NONE

78 POKEMON GOLD AND SILVER



RAPIDASH's ATTACK fell!

82 STAR WARS: BATTLE FOR NABOO

NINTENDO64
4

86 (C-12) FINAL RESISTANCE

HEALTH
PlayStation

88 FIGHTING VIPERS 2 VS PROJECT JUSTICE

Dreamcast.
YOU WIN

90 CLIVE BARKER'S UNDYING

PC CD ROM
58
89

PS2 SUMMONER 92 THUNDER TANKS 97 F1 RACING CHAMPIONSHIP 98 ROBOT WARLORDS 101 NBA LIVE 2001 104 NBA HOOPZ 105 KNOCKOUT KINGS 2001 108 THE BOUNCER 110 **PSONE** DUKE NUKEM: LAND OF THE BABES 94 F1 WORLD GRAND PRIX 98 DEMOLITION RACER 102 GEKIDO 102 POINT BLANK 3 102 RUGRATS IN PARIS 102 SUPERCROSS 103 SOUL REAVER 103 URBAN CHAOS 103 **DC** PROJECT JUSTICE 88 SONIC SHUFFLE 96 GUNBIRD 2 102 CHAMPIONSHIP SURFER 102 GIANT KILLERS 103 **PC** F1 RACING CHAMPIONSHIP 98 FATE OF THE DRAGON 99 **GAME BOY** ROBIN 106 RUGRATS IN PARIS 106 ALIENS: THANATOS ENCOUNTER 106 ANTZ RACING 106 HARVEST MOON 2 106 EMPEROR'S NEW GROOVE 106

PS2

COST: £44.99
OUT: NOW
MULTIPLAYER: **1-2**

WORDS & SCREENSHOTS: ALEX SIMMONS

It's Robot Wars on a giant scale, but without Craig Charles' whining voice ringing in your ears. So there is a God after all

ZOE

At its most basic, *ZOE* is kind of like a sci-fi scrolling beat 'em up, a *Double Dragon* with giant robots instead of two karate kids. The odds are stacked against you, as one wave after another of tooled up droids hurl themselves at your enormous orbital frame, a lethal killing machine that can dish out death and fly at incredible speeds. But there's a little more to *ZOE* than dumb blasting as the presentation is faultless and the action super-intense. And while your trigger finger won't have experienced such punishment in a long time, you'll have to take your brain out of first gear to get the better of some of the armour-plated bosses roaming in here. If you're into white-knuckle videogames, welcome to heaven. Just don't expect it to last for eternity...

EXPLORING THE CITY

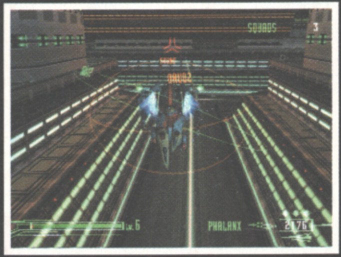
Only a couple of levels are accessible when you first climb inside your orbital frame, Jehuty, but as you defeat enemy 'bots and complete levels, more locations open up. Battle grounds range from densely populated cities to wide-open parks. There are underground sections to explore, too.

ENEMY 2
SQUADS 4
NONE

Grab enemy Mechs and throw them at buildings

ENEMY 2
SQUADS 3
NONE

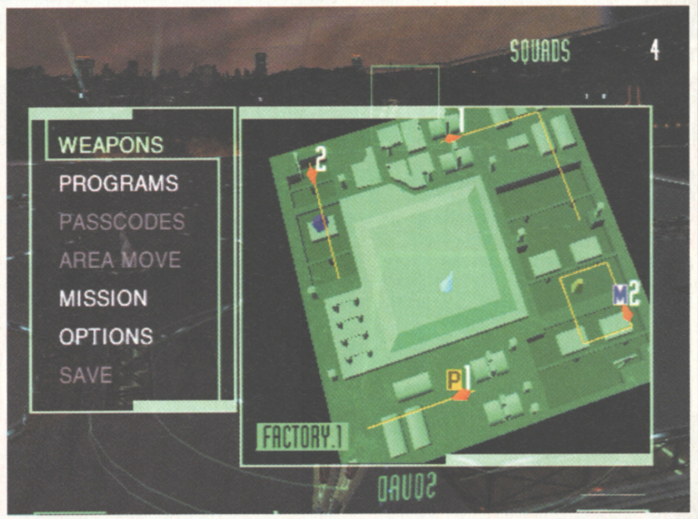
Revisit levels to discover hidden stuff you missed



Some levels have hidden underground bases

Colony damage increasing due to battle.

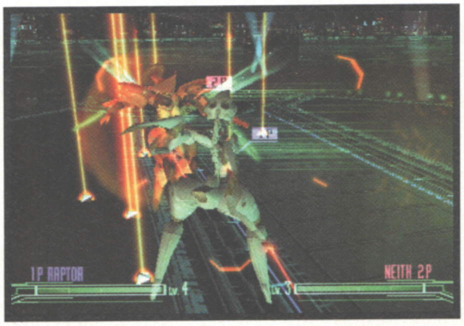
Use scenery to hide behind, popping out to attack



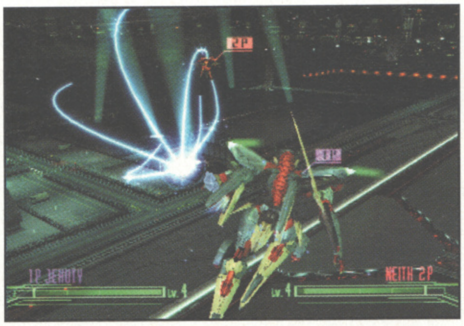
There's just one area to explore initially, but more open up as you complete levels in the game. There are about fifteen arenas to fight in, each patrolled by increasingly tougher robots

VERSUS MODE

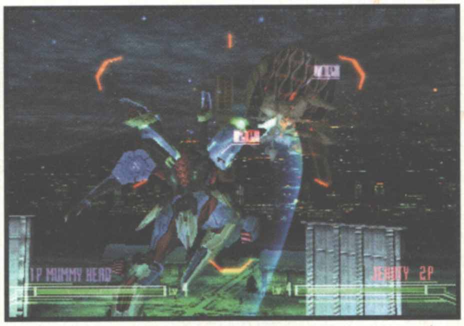
The two-player deathmatch is fun for a bit, but seems more like an afterthought than a proper game mode. You fight as normal, throwing everything you've got at the other guy, but because weapons automatically lock on, there's little room for error. Therefore the winner is usually the guy with the best robot.


2P
1P
1P RAPTOR
NEITH 2P

The camera sits behind one of the 'bots and focuses on the other


2P
1P
1P JEHUTY
NEITH 2P

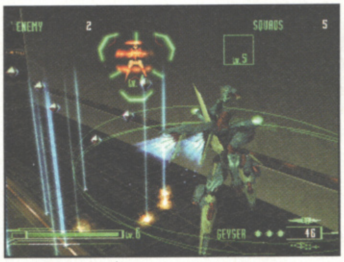
It's no battle of skill, the winner is the one with the best Mech


1P
2P
1P MUMMY HEAD
JEHUTY 2P

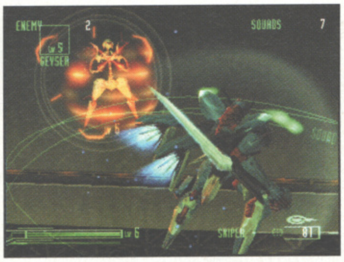
Unlock more robots by progressing through the one-player game

ROBO COMBAT

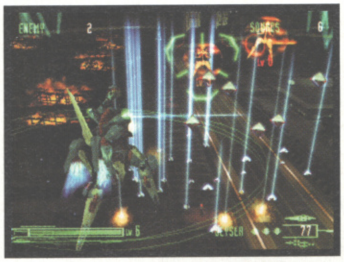
Ripping through enemy robots couldn't be easier – simply lock onto the nearest target and unleash plasma death. Though the standard blaster is pathetic, a couple of swipes with the laser sword is enough to slice through the armour of drone droids. The slow but powerful lightning blast will cripple most other robots, while special weapons are best saved for bosses.


ENEMY 2
SQUADS 5
GEYSER
46

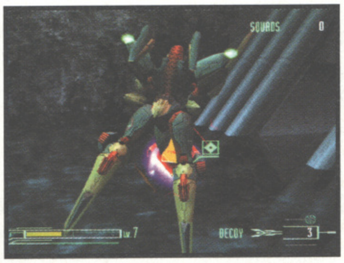
Lock onto the target using L2, then fire away


ENEMY 2
SQUADS 7
GEYSER
81

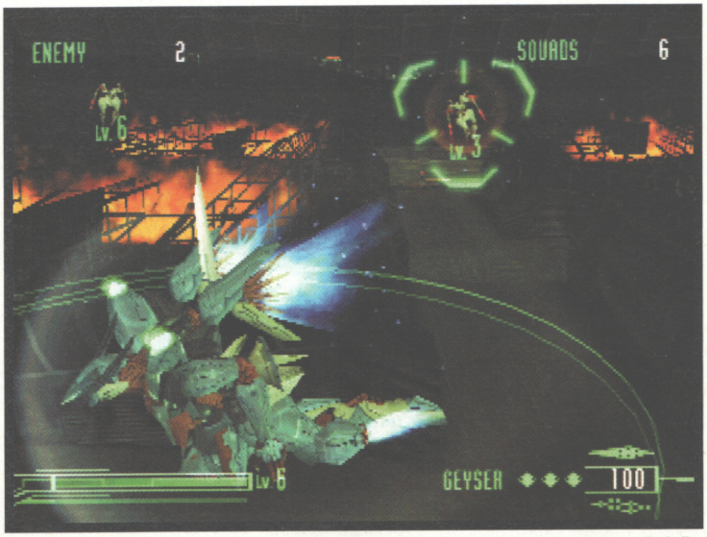
Get in close with the sword and hack them apart


ENEMY 2
SQUADS 6
GEYSER
77

Take on too many Mechs at once and you're dead


SQUADS 0
DECOY
3

There is some seriously cool weaponry to find

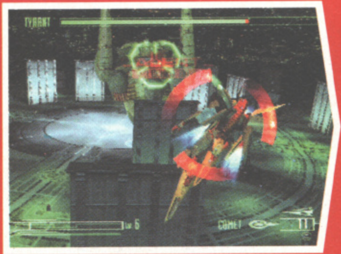

ENEMY 2
SQUADS 6
Lv. 6
Lv. 3
Lv. 6
GEYSER
100

It you've bitten off more than you can chew, hit L1 to turn off Jehuty's targeting system and get the hell out of there. Using afterburners can be a good idea to speed up your escape

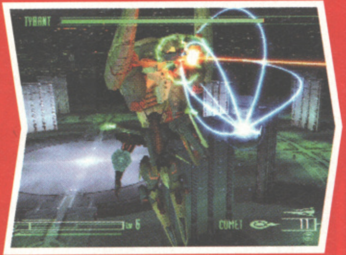
INSTANT PLAYER GUIDE

HE AIN'T SO TOUGH

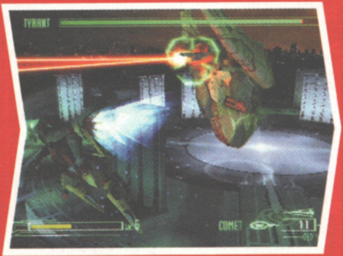
The second boss, Tyrant, is a tough cookie to defeat if you don't know how, but follow these simple steps and he should be wreckage.


TYRANT
COMET
11

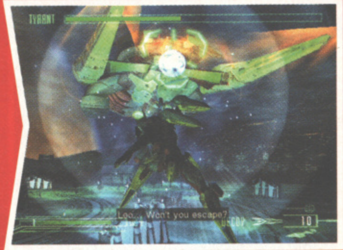
First off, drop a decoy to draw Tyrant's fire away from your fragile Mech. Do it quick though, otherwise you'll be torn to pieces


TYRANT
COMET
11

When the mighty Mech's bombarding your decoy, nip around the side and use Jehuty's shoulder cannons to put a few dents in his armour


TYRANT
COMET
11

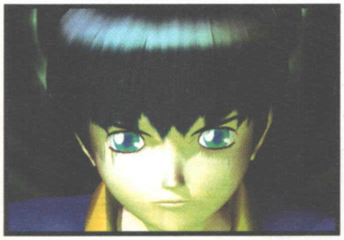
When it transforms and charges you, use your afterburners to sidestep, and after it's ground to a halt, switch to Gauntlet and open fire once again


TYRANT
Leo... Won't you escape?
10

Keep up the attack and eventually it'll start to smoke and explode. If, at any point, it looks like you're going to die, exit and top up on energy

CRYBABY

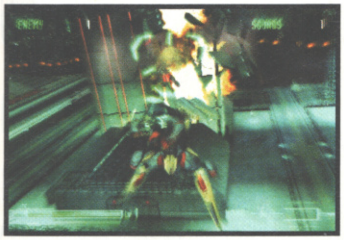
ZOE's a story of good versus evil, but it's no classic fairy tale. Bowl-haired Leo is a wet-behind-the-ears kid who's accidentally in the middle of a Mech invasion, headed by cold blooded vixen Viola. His love interest is Celvice, but she cops it early on.



Leo embraces Celvice as evil Viola plugs a cap in her ass. Luckily she doesn't die, but can Leo exact his revenge? That's really up to you

SUBMISSIONS

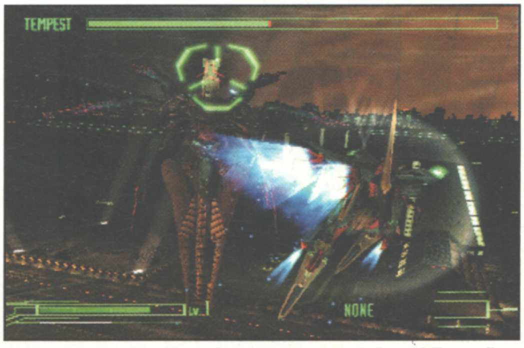
Occasionally you're called to help out innocent civilians. You pick up an SOS and have to rush to their aid and beat off the robo hordes before they level the neighbourhood. The sword keeps collateral damage low.



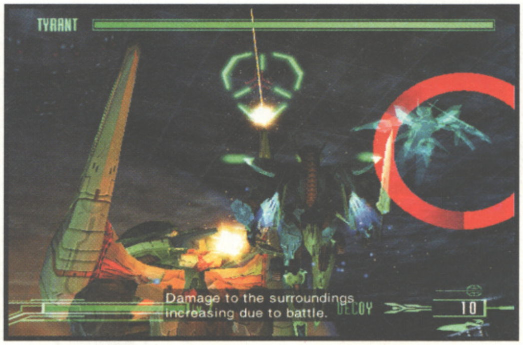
See that cool motion blur effect? That's when a building is being destroyed, which is bad news because it all counts against your hero rating

BIGBOSSES

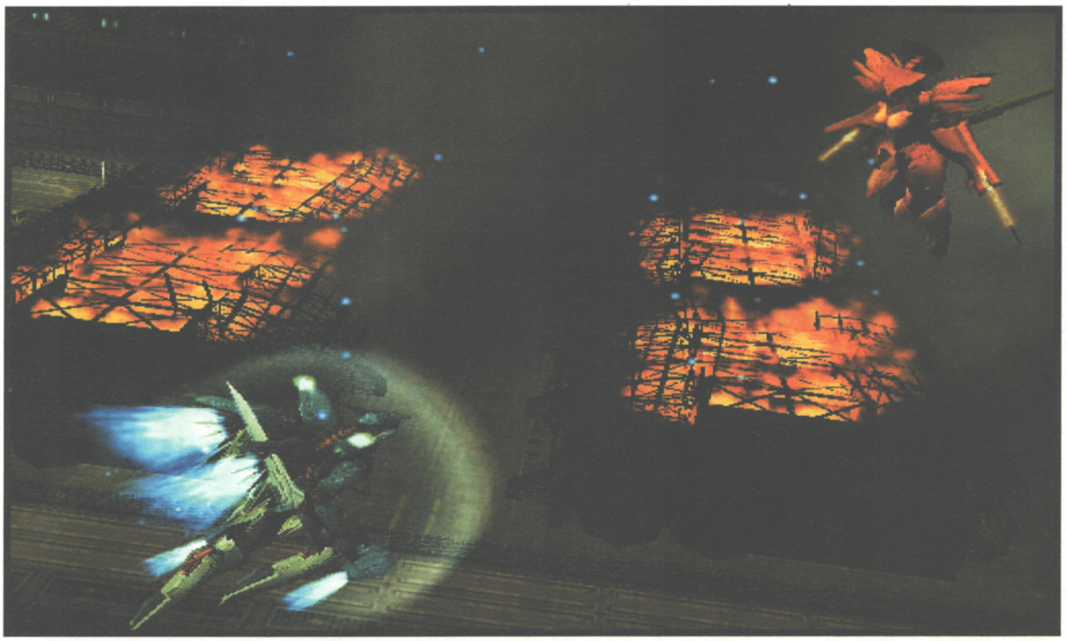
It's possible to hack through most drone robots by tapping the attack button, but you'll need a strategy to defeat *ZOE*'s many bosses. Learn how they attack before you get in close, otherwise you'll be ripped to pieces in seconds.



Tempest looks tough, but focus fire on its weak underbelly and it'll soon die



Use the Decoy to draw fire away from your Mech, then close in for the kill



Neith is Viola's orbital frame. It's more powerful than Jehuty, the frame you're piloting, but by hanging back and using boxes for cover you should just beat her

WHAT WE THOUGHT...

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY THESE...

***Gun Griffon Blaze* (PS2), *Mech Warrior 4* (PC), *Armoured Core* (PS)**

BIG ON ACTION

If you leave your brains at the door you'll have a lot of fun with *ZOE*. Right from the start the gunfights are cranked up to maximum, as your super-sharp Mech zips through some of the most stylish locations we've seen in a videogame, battling beautifully designed robots which fizz around the place smoothly.

It's like watching a Japanese manga cartoon, with special effects guaranteed to impress and non-stop action. The battles get more impressive as the game goes on, with the introduction of huge boss 'bots to spice up the ceaseless struggle against the enemy hordes.

PS2 PERFECTION?

While it lasts, it's very hard to fault *ZOE*. Sure, wading through endless streams of enemy droids gets a little repetitive, especially as it's possible to kill most of them using the same tactic – lock on using L2 and use the afterburners to get in close, jinking to either side. Then hack away with the lightning sword until it's all over.

It all looks amazing, though. It's one of the fastest blasters around and has some spectacular special effects, and you'll end up fighting even when your energy is dangerously low, just to check out the incredible lighting effects and earth-shattering explosions.

ZOE'S ACHILLES HEEL

The big problem here is *ZOE* just doesn't last very long. We finished it in about seven hours on our first go, and if you know what you're doing you can do it in around two. It's extremely intense while it lasts, and you really will be on the edge of your seat for the few hours it takes to reach the end, but when Viola kicks the bucket it's as good as over. There's not a great deal of replay value either: apart from the sub-missions which crop up every so often, you'll have seen it all first time round. Don't get us wrong, *ZOE* is a class game, but it comes to an end just as you really start to get into it.

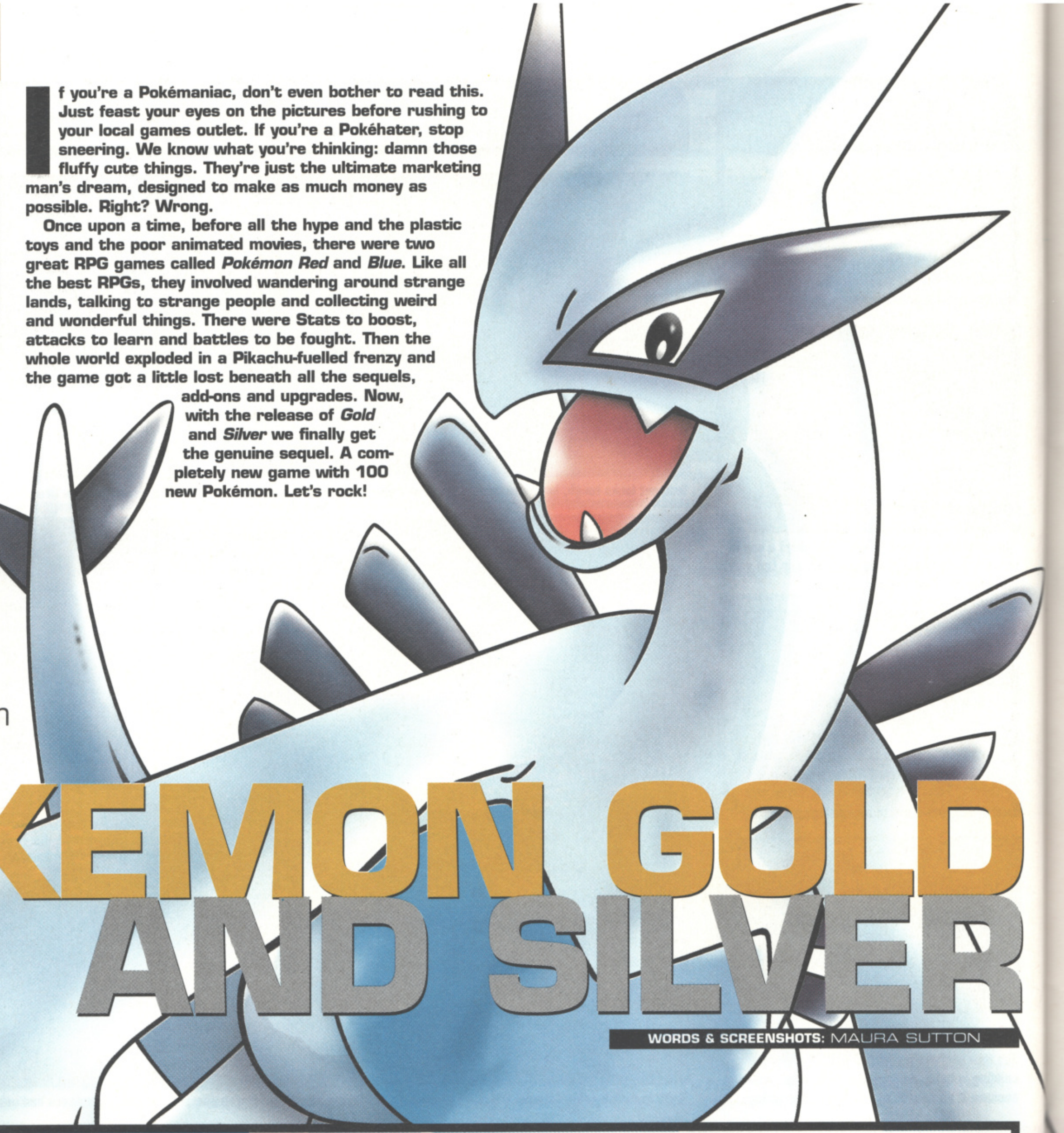
However, *ZOE* has an ace up its sleeve: when it's released in mid-March it'll come with a demo of *Metal Gear Solid 2*, so you get a great game and an even better playable teaser of 2001's biggest blockbuster for just under £45. So, with the *Metal Gear Solid 2* demo, the *ZOE* package is a perfect five. But as a standalone game it gets a highly recommended four.

computer and video Games
★★★★

COST: £24.99
OUT: APRIL
MULTIPLAYER: 1-2

If you're a Pokémaniac, don't even bother to read this. Just feast your eyes on the pictures before rushing to your local games outlet. If you're a Pokéhater, stop sneering. We know what you're thinking: damn those fluffy cute things. They're just the ultimate marketing man's dream, designed to make as much money as possible. Right? Wrong.

Once upon a time, before all the hype and the plastic toys and the poor animated movies, there were two great RPG games called *Pokémon Red* and *Blue*. Like all the best RPGs, they involved wandering around strange lands, talking to strange people and collecting weird and wonderful things. There were Stats to boost, attacks to learn and battles to be fought. Then the whole world exploded in a Pikachu-fuelled frenzy and the game got a little lost beneath all the sequels, add-ons and upgrades. Now, with the release of *Gold* and *Silver* we finally get the genuine sequel. A completely new game with 100 new Pokémon. Let's rock!



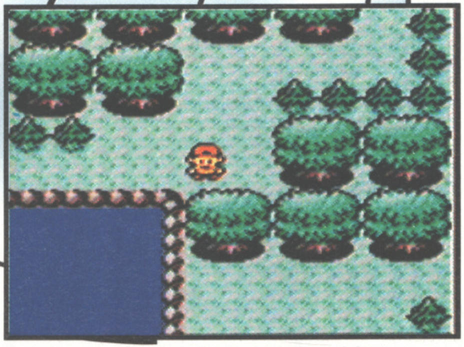
The most fun you can have with two hands

POKEMON GOLD AND SILVER

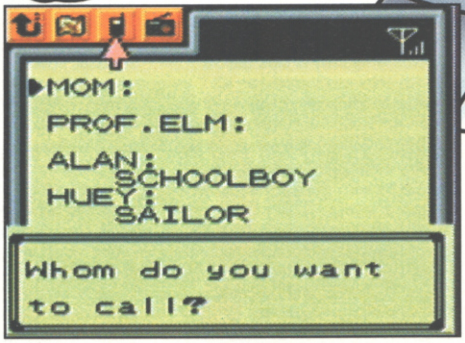
WORDS & SCREENSHOTS: MAURA SUTTON

WHAT'S NEW, PIKACHU?

One of the many fantastic things about *Gold* and *Silver* is how they feel so new and exciting while not departing from the classic formula. Everything that made the earlier games so good has been kept, while the new additions and tweaks are so skillfully done they feel like they've been around forever.



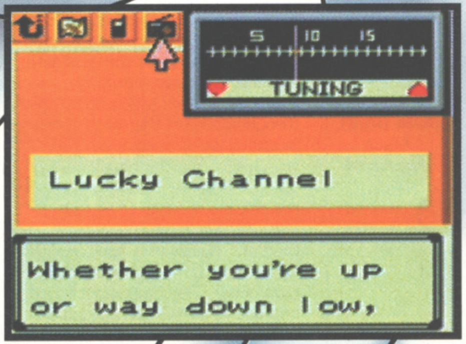
Timing is crucial. Set the clock at the beginning and the game progresses in real-time. Some Pokémon can only be caught at night



▶MOM:
PROF.ELM:
ALAN: SCHOOLBOY
HUEY: SAILOR

Whom do you want to call?

Mobile phones are everywhere these days, even in *Pokémon*. Your Pokémobile keeps you in touch with fellow trainers



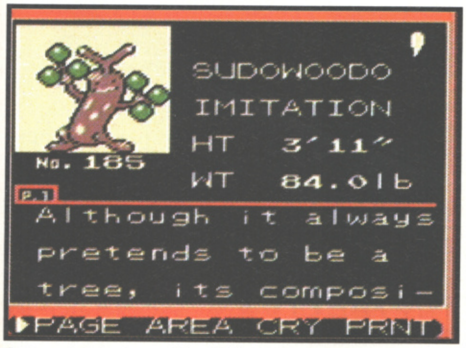
Lucky Channel

Whether you're up or way down low,

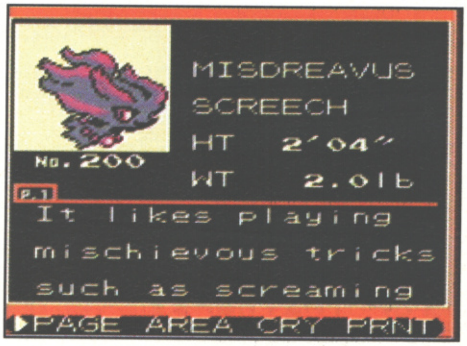
You also get to carry a radio in your Pokégear. Aside from Professor Oak's Pokémon talk show, you can also listen to music

GOTTA CATCH'EM ALL!

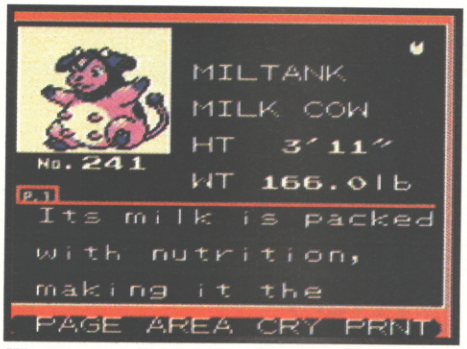
One of the main reasons that *Pokémon* is so successful is the amazingly creative range of monsters. *Gold* and *Silver* introduces 100 completely magical new creations reflecting the usual *Pokémon* mixture of cuteness and weirdness. Step up Teddiursa, come on down, Spinarak. It's time to meet the new kids.


SUDOWOODO
IMITATION
HT 3′11″
No.185
WT 84.0lb
P.1
Although it always pretends to be a tree, its composi–
▶PAGE AREA CRY PRNT

Sudowoodo tries to pass himself off as a dancing tree, but he's actually a rock. Stupid pillock. There's only one of these in the game


MISDREAVUS
SCREECH
HT 2′04″
No.200
WT 2.0lb
P.1
It likes playing mischievous tricks such as screaming
▶PAGE AREA CRY PRNT

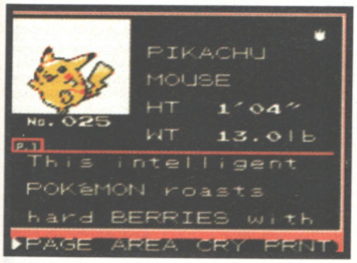
Misdreavus! One of the new Dark Pokémon. Not only is she creepy, she's a great Pokémon to have 'cos of her strong Psychic powers


MILTANK
MILK COW
HT 3′11″
No.241
WT 166.0lb
P.1
Its milk is packed with nutrition, making it the
PAGE AREA CRY PRNT

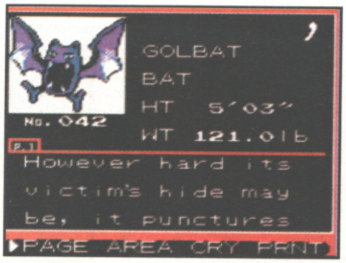
Miltank is another of our favourites. She's got a devastating Rollout attack and the healing powers of her, er, milk are legendary

CVG'S POKEMON DREAM TEAMS

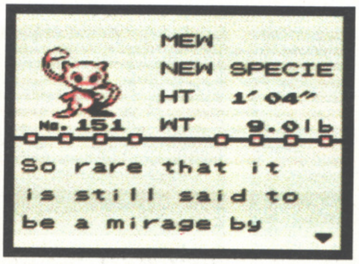
OK, so you've finally managed to catch all 251 Pokémon. The question then is: who would you choose to be in your ultimate fighting team? Who better to ask than our very own CVG Pokémaniacs...


PIKACHU
MOUSE
HT 1′04″
No.025
WT 13.0lb
P.1
This intelligent POKéMON roasts hard BERRIES with
▶PAGE AREA CRY PRNT

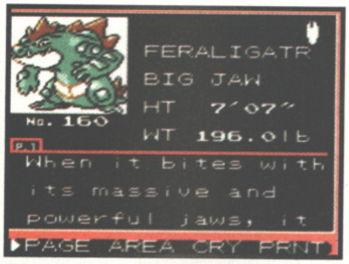
TEAM NAME: Cute But Deadly **TRAINER:** Lee Skittrell
TEAM: PIKACHU, ARTICUNO, LUGIA, MILTANK, MAREEP, MEGANIUM
VERDICT: Don't be fooled by the cuteness factor. Pikachu and Mareep may be cuddly, but they are capable of devastating Electric moves. This is a well balanced team with a good mixture of Flying, Grass, Ice and Normal Pokémon


GOLBAT
BAT
HT 5′03″
No.042
WT 121.0lb
P.1
However hard its victim's hide may be, it punctures
▶PAGE AREA CRY PRNT

TEAM NAME: Doom Legion **TRAINER:** Les Ellis
TEAM: HOUNDOOM, UMBREON, UNOWN, MUK, GENGAR, GOLBAT
VERDICT: Be very afraid. This team combines powerful Dark and Fire types like Houndoom and Umbreon with Psychic and Poisonous Pokémon. Golbat's a top choice with its lethal cocktail of Bug, Normal, Ghost, Flying and Ice moves


MEW
NEW SPECIE
HT 1′04″
No.151
WT 9.0lb
So rare that it is still said to be a mirage by

TEAM NAME: Elite Force **TRAINER:** Alex Simmons
TEAM: MEW, SUICUNE, ENTEI, RAIKOU, SUDOWOODO, CELEBI
You'd have to be a Pokémon Master to assemble this team of rare beasts. Mew and Celebi are both only available via download at special *Pokémon* events, while Suicune, Entei and Raikou can be found roaming at random throughout Kanto and Johto

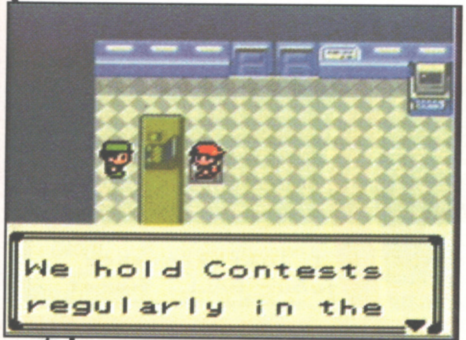

FERALIGATR
BIG JAW
HT 7′07″
No.160
WT 196.0lb
P.1
When it bites with its massive and powerful jaws, it
▶PAGE AREA CRY PRNT

TEAM NAME: Motley Crew **TRAINER:** Maura Sutton
TEAM: HO-OH, FERALIGATR, HOOTHOOT, GEODUDE, POLIWHIRL, MISDREAVUS
This may look like a strange mixture, but these Pokémon are all three-time Hall O' Famers, having beaten the Elite Four on three occasions and gained all 16 Gym badges. They've got it all. Fire, Flying, Water, Rock, Ghost and Psychic. Boo-ya!

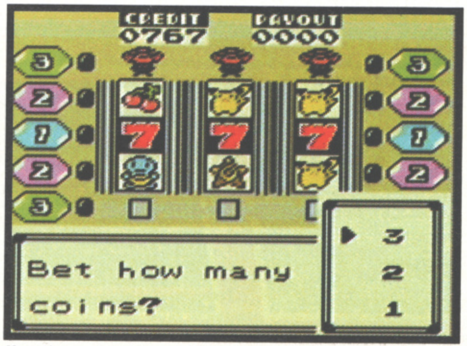
> **"Look at the huge variety in the gameplay"**

BIG AND CLEVER

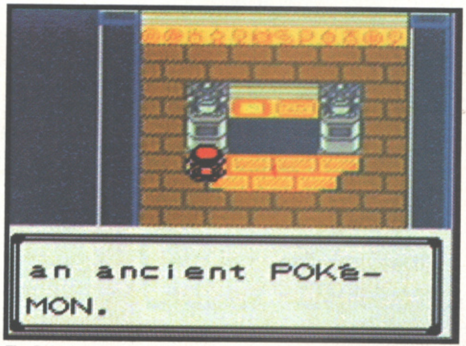
Pokémon Gold and *Silver* are more than just bog-standard RPG games. Look at the huge variety of gameplay. It's not just about wandering around vast maps talking to trainers and thrashing Gym Leaders. There are loads of different challenges to face, many of which can only take place at certain times of the day or even only once or twice a week.


We hold Contests regularly in the

The Bug-Catching Contest takes place in a Park every Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday. You can catch unique Pokémon here


CREDIT
0767
PAYOUT
0000
Bet how many coins?
▶ 3
2
1

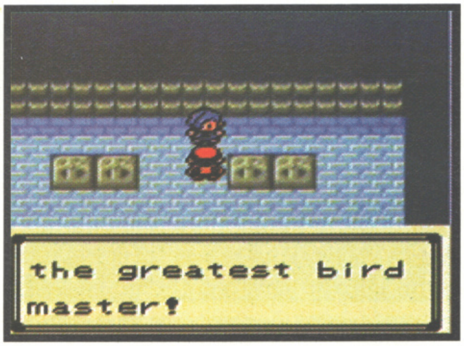
If you fancy a break from battling, you can visit the Game Corners in some of the cities. Save your winnings to buy rare Pokémon


an ancient POKé-
MON.

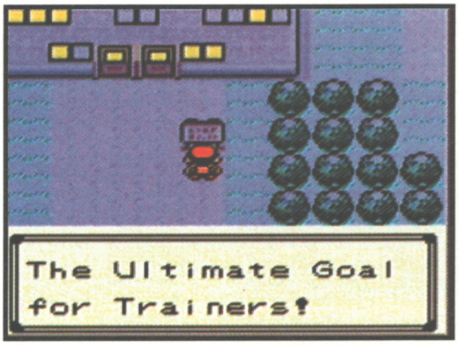
The Ruins of Alph are chock full of strange phenomena and the 26 mysterious Unown Pokémon, who even have their own Pokédex

GYMNASTICFANTASTIC

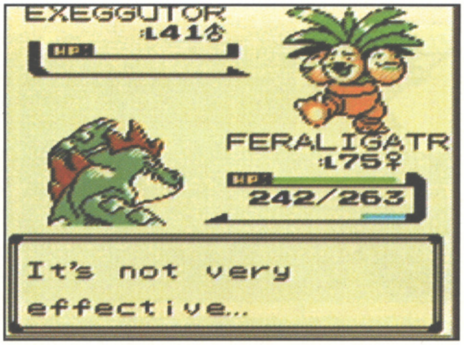
As you roam from town to town in *Gold* and *Silver*, you'll find that you still have to fight Gym leaders to establish your supremacy. Beat them and you'll get a shiny new badge to add to your collection. When you've pummelled all the Gym leaders in Johto, you will have to face the Elite trainers of the Pokémon League.


the greatest bird master!

Your first Gym battle is with Falkner, the Bird Pokémon King who lives in Violet City. Beat him to win the Zephyr Badge, which allows you to use Flash to light up dark caves


The Ultimate Goal for Trainers!

When you've got eight Gym badges in Johto, you're ready to face the Elite Four trainers, who hang out in the Pokémon League HQ at Indigo Plateau. There's a fifth mystery trainer, too. Woo!

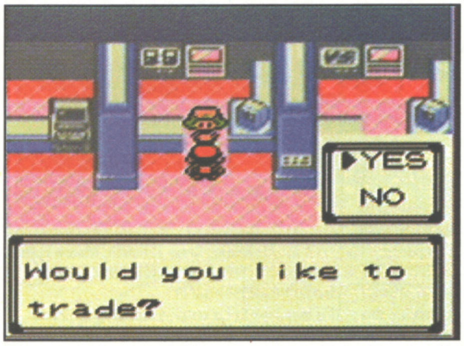


It's not very effective...

After defeating the Elite Four, you're still only half-way through the game, with many more Gym leaders to battle. You'll be meeting some familiar faces from previous *Pokémon* games, such as Misty

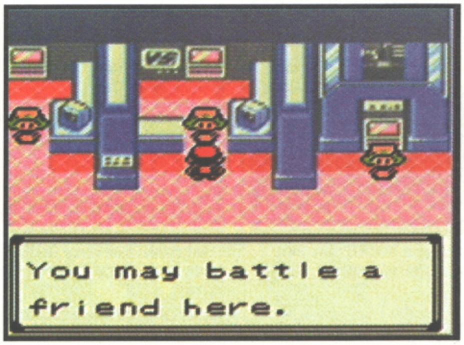
MULTIPLEJOY

Pokémon has always been a sociable game where you can get together with your mates to battle and trade. *Gold* and *Silver* offer even more ways of interacting with your pals' Pokémon collections. The Poké Centres have been updated and improved in every way, making it much easier to swap your spare Pokémon. If you haven't already got a link cable, it's time to get one.

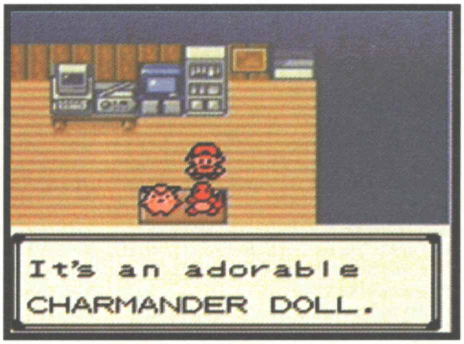


Would you like to trade?

Venture upstairs at any Pokémon Centre to use the trading area. If your mate visits a Centre at the same time as you, you can sit down at the table and begin the serious business of Pokémon trading


You may battle a friend here.

You'll also find the Cable Club Colosseum upstairs in the Poké Centre. This is where you can link up and battle your mates. Just talk to the lady behind the counter and then get ready to rumble


It's an adorable CHARMANDER DOLL.

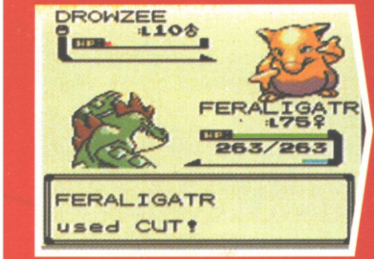
After a while, you get the Mystery Gift option on the menu. Line up the little black rectangle at the top of two Game Boy Colors to exchange cool gifts such as potions and dolls via the Infra-Red port

> **"It really is time to get a link cable"**

INSTANT PLAYER GUIDE INSTANT PLAYER GUIDE INSTANT PLAYER GUI

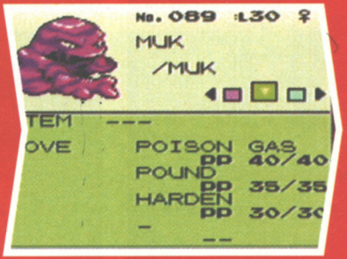
HOW TO CATCH A POKEMON

Gotta catch 'em all, they say, so here are a few of our tips for snaring that elusive sucker you've been chasing for the last week.

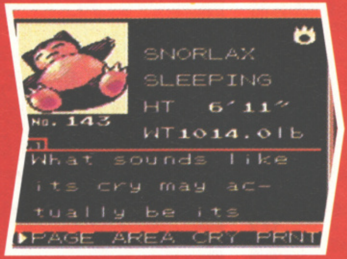


FERALIGATR used CUT!

You need a good mix of levels in your team to catch other Pokémon. A L73 Pokemon will kill a L10 Pokémon instantly, which is no good at all

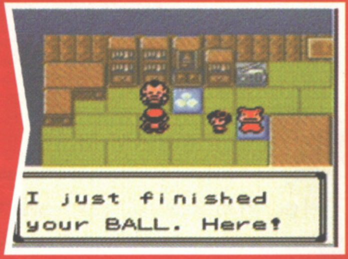


Avoid using poison moves as although they can be good for paralysing Pokémon, their cumulative toxic attack can often wipe out your quarry



What sounds like its cry may actually be its

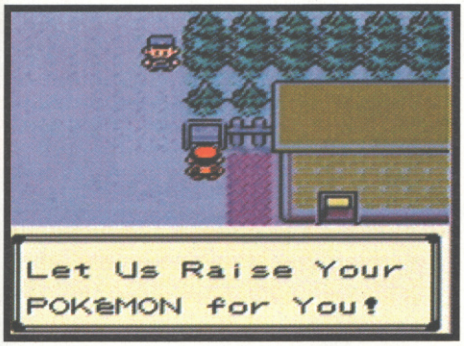
Try and have at least one Pokémon in your team that can use sleep magic. This way you can make sure shy beasts like Chancey can't run away


I just finished your BALL. Here!

Give Kurt in Azalea Town apricorns so that he can make special Pokéballs for you. These will come very much in handy for luring certain critters

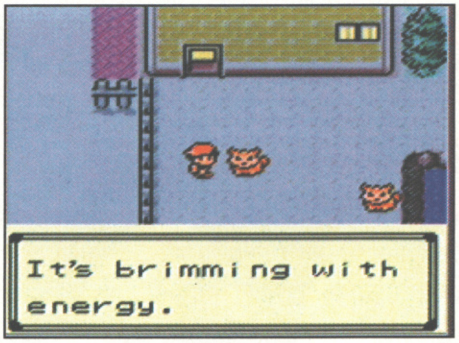
LET IT BREED

One of the less obvious additions to *Pokémon Gold* and *Silver* is the inclusion of the male and female symbols in the Pokédex. to show the sex of your Pokémon. Apart from helping you to decide what presents to buy them for Christmas and what colour to paint their room, these symbols are essential when it comes to the new Pokémon breeding facility.



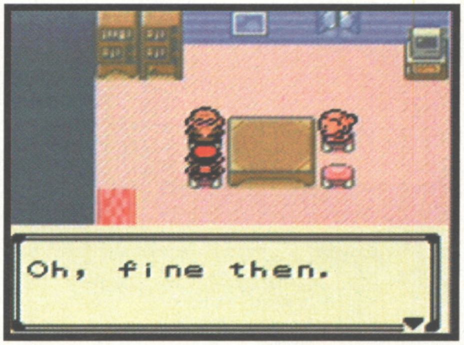
Let Us Raise Your POKéMON for You!

You can breed Pokémon by leaving one of each sex with the old couple in the Daycare Centre just South of Goldenrod City



It's brimming with energy.

After depositing your Pokémon at the Day Care Centre, return to the garden in a few minutes to find out if they like each other



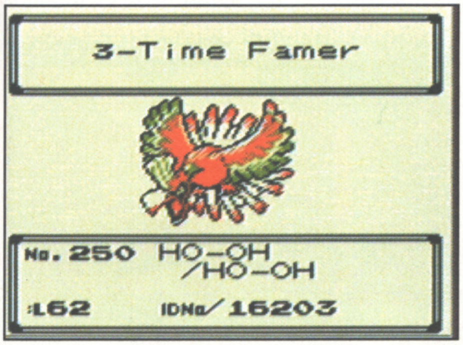
Oh, fine then.

If they take to each other, return a few hours later to collect your egg, which will hatch later. You can breed rare Pokémon this way

> **"You should know by now that you have to buy at least one of them"**

GOLD VS SILVER

So you should know by now that you have to buy at least one of them. The big question is: should it be *Gold* or *Silver*, or both? As with *Red* and *Blue*, both games are basically the same, but there are some differences, as well as some Pokémon that are only available in one or other - but hey, that's why you can trade between versions.

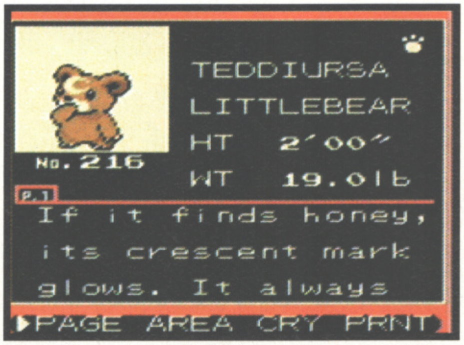


3-Time Famer

No.250 HO-OH /HO-OH

L62 IDNo/16203

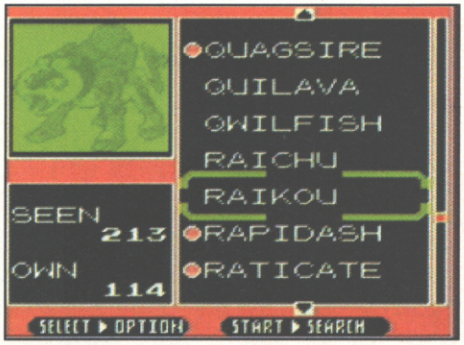
In *Gold*, you can catch legendary Pokémon Ho-Oh half-way through the game and Lugia at the end. It's the other way round in *Silver*



TEDDIURSA
LITTLEBEAR
HT 2'00"
WT 19.0lb
No.216

P.1 If it finds honey, its crescent mark glows. It always

Some Pokémon only appear in *Gold* like Teddiursa, Ursaring and Spinarak. And some only in *Silver* like Ledian, Skarmory and Delibird



QUAGSIRE
QUILAVA
QWILFISH
RAICHU
RAIKOU
RAPIDASH
RATICATE

SEEN 213
OWN 114

The pictures and descriptions of the Pokémon in the Pokédex are different in *Gold* and *Silver*. You need both to learn all the facts

WHAT WE THOUGHT...

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY THESE...

***Pokémon* Red, Blue, Yellow (Game Boy), *Pokémon Stadium* (N64), *Pokémon Snap* (N64)**

PREACHING TO THE CONVERTED

Pokémaniacs won't want to bother reading this review. All you need to know is that *Gold* and *Silver* are better – yes, *better* – than the previous games and that they are packed with loads of new features and improvements. Those gorgeous people at Nintendo have thought of absolutely everything. You can even use the Poké Centre Time Machines to import your well-trained Pokémon from the originals and see how they shape up against the new guys. You have to actually fix the machine half-way through the game to use it, so you can't cheat by trading all your oldies into your new game right at the start.

RESISTANCE IS FUTILE

If you've never played a Pokémon game before and always wondered what all the fuss was about, now is the time to surrender to the Great God Pikachu. There's something so incredibly compelling about battling and collecting these amazing creatures that you just won't be able to stop. Catching the rare ones takes a surprising degree of gaming skill and there's nothing to compare with that tinglingly tense feeling when you've just trapped a rare critter that you've been chasing for days. And when you encounter a super-rare Pokémon with just one chance to nab it, the pressure is really on.

WORTH PLAYING?

If you have a pulse, yes. Lumps of wood or moist cardboard boxes (except for the one that stars in *MGS*) may remain unmoved by *Gold* and *Silver*, but every other being on the planet will love them to death – if they only give them a chance. For unbelievers, if you put aside your PokéPrejudices for a moment and see past the kiddie veneer, you will discover – as millions of other players worldwide have – that this is hardcore adventuring and RPG action at its finest. And forgetting the ultra-addictive gameplay, when it comes down to hard, cold cash, *Gold* and *Silver* are supreme value for money too. As with *Red*, *Blue* and *Yellow*, it's not uncommon to rack up well-over 100 hours trying to catch 'em all, and here there are *two* whole worlds to explore. You'll still be playing these sequels months and possible years after you buy them, and soon you'll be able to use all your new Pokémon in *Pokémon Stadium 2* out on N64 in October. Gotcha! There's no escape!

computer and video Games

★★★★★

NINTENDO64

COST: **£49.99**
OUT: **MAR**
MULTIPLAYER: **NO**

It's Star Wars, but is it just the wrong episode?

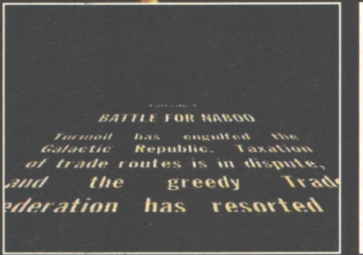
BATTLE FOR NABOO

WORDS & SCREENSHOTS: JOHNNY MINKLEY

Fear leads to anger; anger leads to hate; hate leads to suffering. Yadda, yadda, yadda. That 800-year-old puppet Yoda can stick his philosophising. It's fine if you're Mr I'm-A-Jedi-Check-My-Lightsaber, but for the Forceless masses life is a struggle full of torment and temptation. Take Lt Gavyn Sykes, for example. Faced with the imminent invasion of his home planet, he must summon the courage to defend his world from the threat of the Trade Federation, Force or no Force. So it is that without the guidance of a Jedi master, you must assume the role of Sykes, and protect Naboo from a fate worse than the progeny of Chris Evans and Billie.

USE THE LICENCE, LUKE

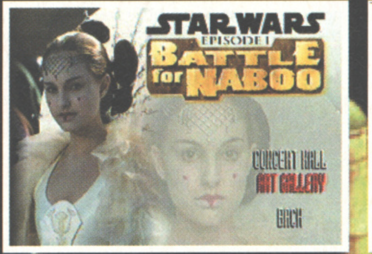
As was the case with *Rogue Squadron*, Factor 5 has made excellent use of the licence in *Battle For Naboo*. Both music and detail from the movie have been well implemented, and the feeling of being part of the Star Wars universe is totally convincing.



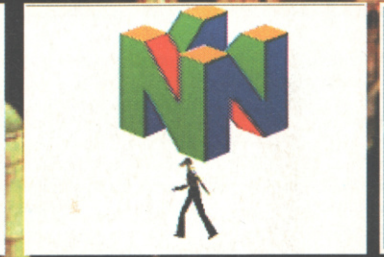
BATTLE FOR NABOO

Turmoil has engulfed the Galactic Republic. Taxation of trade routes is in dispute, and the greedy Trad ederation has resorted

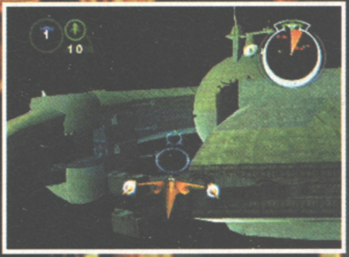
No Star Wars game would be complete without the scrolling intro text. Goose-bumps every time



There's some wicked original artwork from the film, including this pic of the luscious Natalie Portman



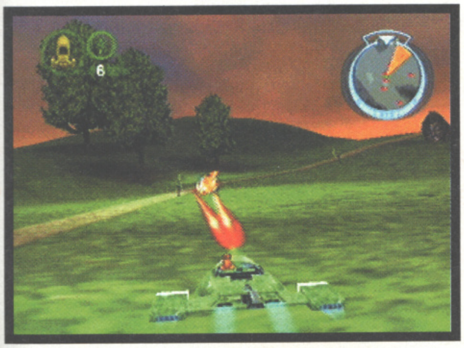
Praise the Lord they've seen fit to crush irritating Jar Jar Binks beneath a giant Nintendo symbol



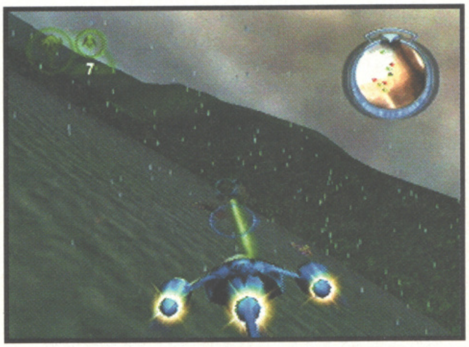
Though most of the action is not from the film, you do get to attack the Trade Federation control ship

HOLYSHIP!

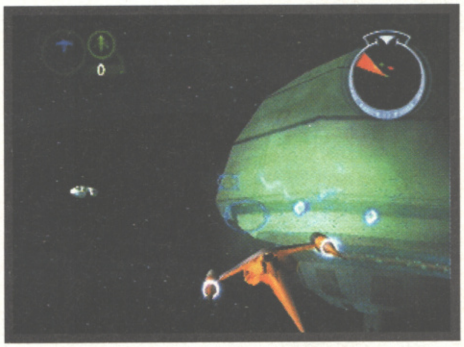
Star Wars is like a religion to huge swathes of people globally, and the stunning craft are an integral part of the gospel according to Lucas. You'll control several craft in Naboo, but as sleek as they are, they just don't carry the same kudos as their Episode IV, V and VI cousins. You just can't get better than a TIE fighter or an X-Wing. Guess which ship CVG's Darth Les prefers...



Somewhat akin to Luke Skywalker's T-16, you begin your planetary defence in the nippy, ground-locked Flash Speeder



The Police Cruiser is the first aircraft you control. While not exactly an X-Wing, it does the trick and carries funky proton torpedoes

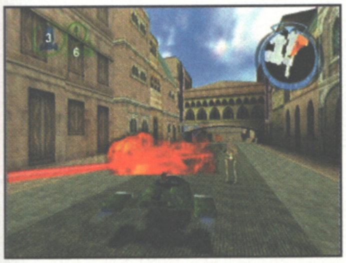


The Naboo Starfighter is the ultimate ship in the game, and is the one which Anakin Skywalker brings down the enemy with in the film

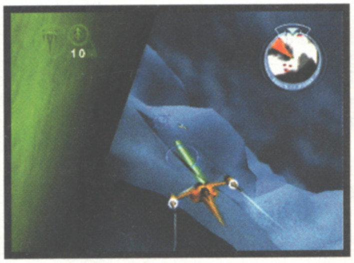
"Star Wars is a religion to many, and the stunning craft are an integral part of the gospel of St Lucas"

ENVIRONMENTALDISASTER

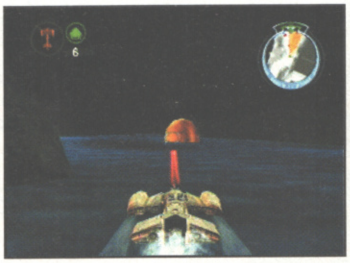
The planet of Naboo is a thing of beauty, bursting with lush, wooded countryside, dense marshlands and majestic cities. In the course of your adventure you'll get to destroy and ruin many of these fantastic environments, with each offering a different gaming experience.



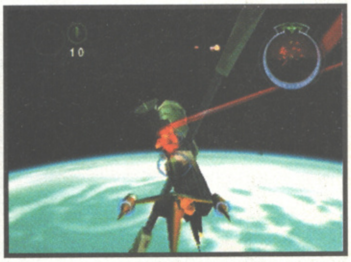
Theed is the beautiful capital city of Naboo, where much of the action in the movie takes place



Artistic licence has been taken with this stunning glacial environment. Note the cool lighting effects



Some levels are river-based, giving you proximity mines and land-based artillery to deal with

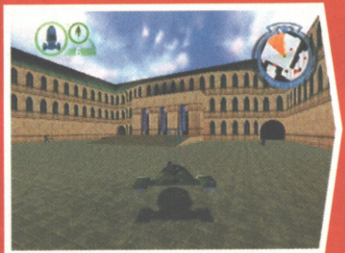


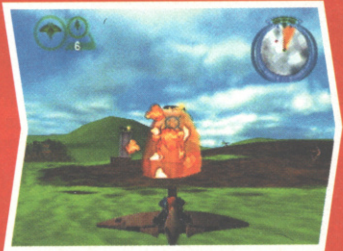
You want a space battle? You got it. Unfortunately, the dodgy radar makes it hard to track enemies

INSTANT PLAYER GUIDE INSTANT PLAYER GUIDE INSTANT PLAYER GUI

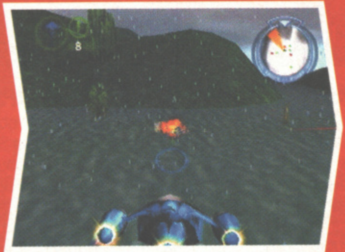
BE FORCEFUL

"My ally is the Force, and a powerful ally it is." Make sure it's on *your* side too with these tips.

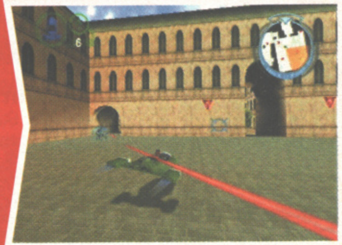

Know your radar. Make sure you pay attention to the orange triangle that tells you where you should be. Green is good, red is bad



Remember your secondary weapon, accessed via the left C button. Each craft has a different one, always in limited supplies, so use them wisely



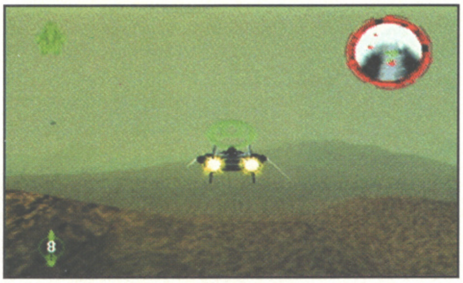
Accuracy can be difficult when in a dogfight. Try slowing right down and using the Z-trigger to give you valuable extra time to line up your sights



There'll be times when you need to make a quick exit. Hold down the R button when turning, and you'll swing away at a tighter angle

IS THE DARKSIDE STRONGER?

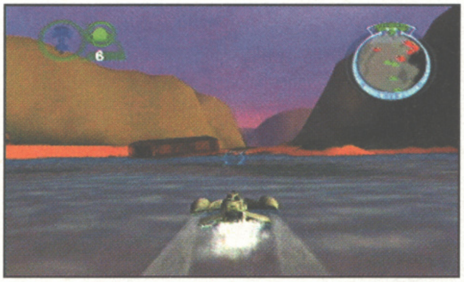
Because *Battle For Naboo* is so similar to its predecessor, we decided to dig out *Rogue Squadron* to see exactly what they've managed to improve on. Can The Phantom Menace inspire as good a game as the timeless trilogy?

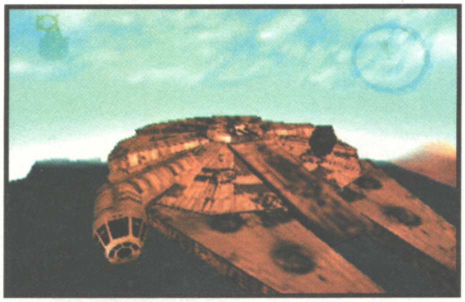


GRAPHICS

Rogue Squadron was the first N64 title to use the Expansion Pak, and at the time looked the business, giving ultra-sharp graphics with more textures as well as a greater amount of music and speech. The Star Wars universe was recreated superbly, but the trade-off was the ubiquitous presence of fog that clouded almost every level. *Naboo* uses the same engine but it's much smoother, and the fog has completely lifted. There are also some staggeringly large enemy craft in *Naboo*, in particular the enormous Trade Federation control ship.

***BATTLE FOR NABOO* IS THE CLEAR WINNER**

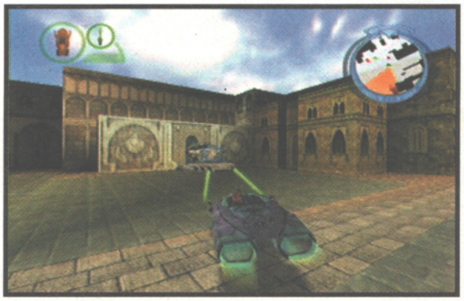


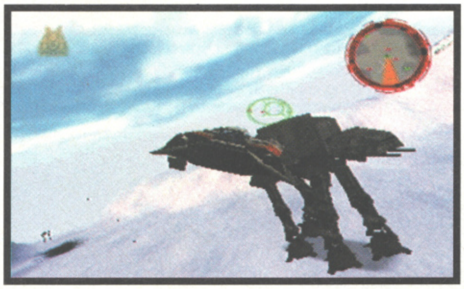


SHIPS

No contest. Would you rather be Luke Skywalker, clashing with a fleet of enraged TIE fighters, or some faceless Lieutenant shooting robots in a Flash Speeder? Thought so. There's just nothing quite like being behind the controls of an X-Wing, as you thrash around space, expertly weaving in and out of enemy fire with the Millennium Falcon in support. The craft in Phantom Menace just aren't as exciting or as imaginative as their Episode IV, V and VI counterparts. OK, the Naboo Starfighter is pretty cool, but given a choice between that and the Millennium Falcon, which would you go for?

TOTALLY ONE-SIDED. *ROGUE SQUADRON* IS KING

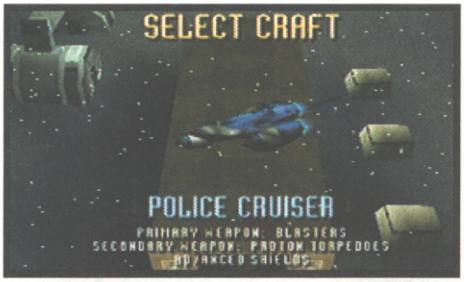


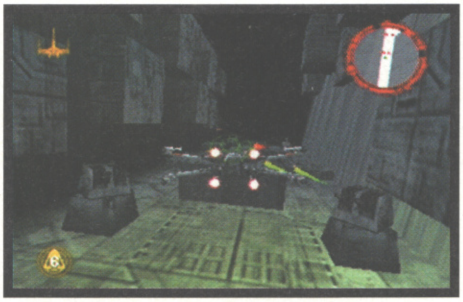


FEATURES

Apart from all the blasting, what do the titles have to offer in terms of additional gameplay features to break up the action? One criticism that can be levelled at both is their repetitive nature, with the missions generally having the same kind of objectives (attack/defend etc). In terms of variety, *Rogue Squadron* possesses the awesome Snowspeeder levels, where you can unleash a tow cable at an AT-AT to snare its legs. One definite plus in *Naboo* is the ability to change ships mid-mission, giving you an entirely new perspective on a level.

***NABOO* SCORES WITH CHANGING SHIPS**

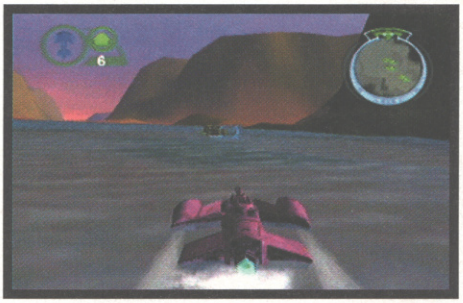




SECRETS

Both games have secrets in spades. *Naboo* has a series of cool secret levels, some containing the twisted Darth Maul. There's also a wicked cheat which gives you in-game commentary from the developers describing how each level was constructed. Oh, and you can turn your ship pink if that tickles your fancy. Hmmm. *Rogue Squadron* has loads of hidden goodies, like (oh yes!) the Millennium Falcon, and even the trench run on the Death Star. Thank you, Lord.

***ROGUE SQUADRON* IS TRENCH RUN HEAVEN**



***NABOO* IS THE BETTER GAME, BUT FOR STAR WARS FANS, *ROGUE SQUADRON* JUST EDGES IT**

WHAT WE THOUGHT...

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY THESE...

***Rogue Squadron* (N64), *Star Trek: Invasion* (PSone)**

OBI-WAN TAUGHT YOU WELL...

Naboo is the last Star Wars game for the N64. And this time they have had a much freer reign with the licence, meaning plenty of environments, though still packed with authentic Star Wars detail that Phantom Menace fans will lap up. Thankfully, they've managed to squeeze a solid blaster in here too, though not without its flaws.

BUT YOU ARE NOT A JEDI YET

There are two main problems here. The similarity to *Rogue Squadron*, and the more limited potential of the Phantom Menace licence. Despite the intensity of the battles, the smooth controls and range of craft, an irrational craving for X-Wings, TIE Fighters and Death Stars will overwhelm you. No matter how good the Phantom Menace movie is, it just hasn't eaten into the consciousness of mankind as the previous trilogy did.

FORCE OR FARCE?

That said, *Naboo* does edge *Rogue* for gameplay, so if the Star Wars issues don't bother you, go with this. Owners of the original should think very carefully, however, and Star Wars fans that own neither would perhaps be better off with *Rogue*, which should be much cheaper now anyway. This is good, but not enough of an improvement.

computer and video games
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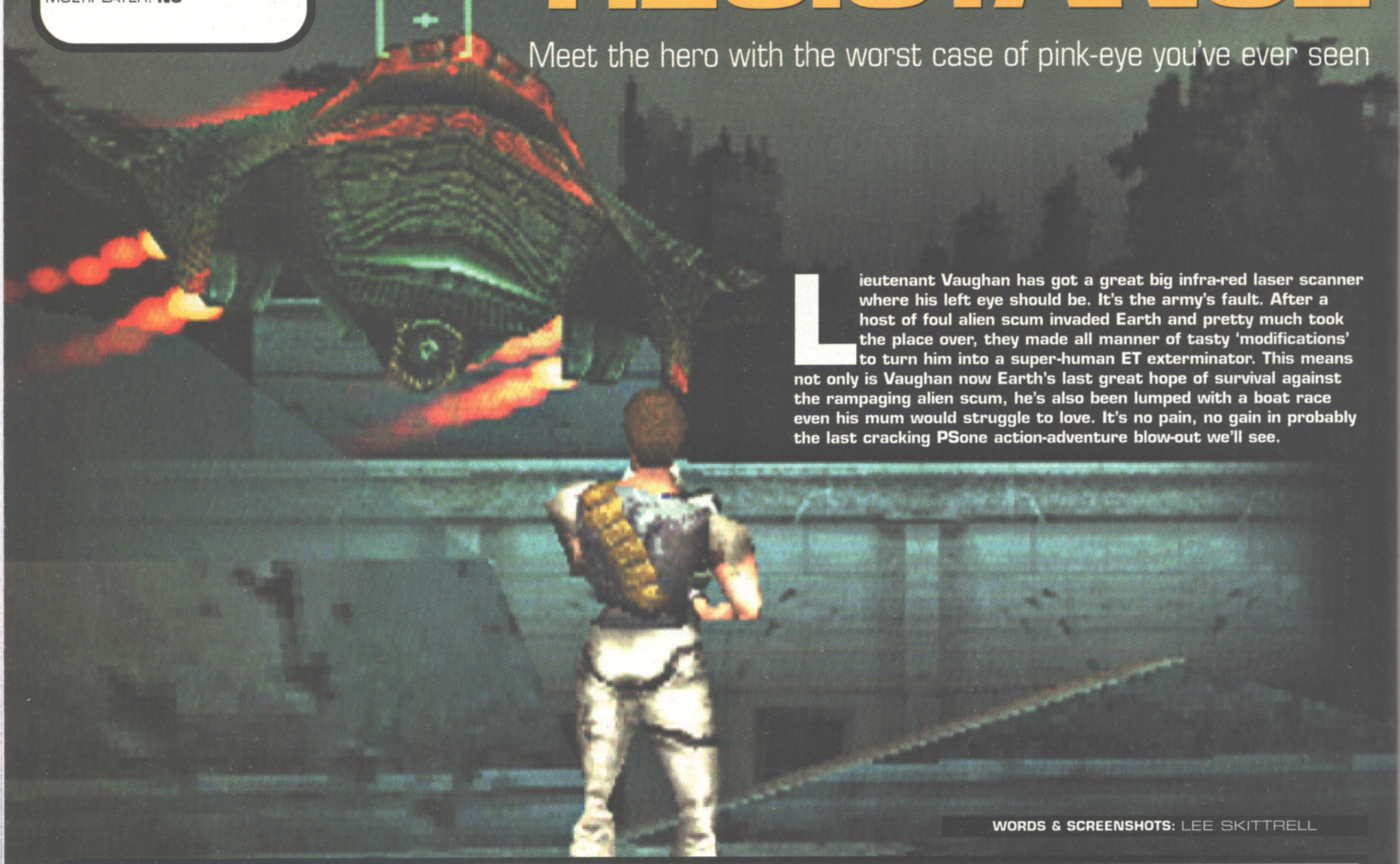
Most competitions require a tone phone. If a competition is marked INSTANT WIN then you will be told if you are a winner during your call. Instant Win competitions have questions and a game to decide if you are an instant winner. Other competitions involve questions with tiebreaker and end on the 31st May 2001 (unless otherwise indicated), after which they may be replaced by a similar service on the same number. Actual designs may vary. Accuracy cannot be guaranteed. Fanz may use data, received in your call, to make offers to you. If you DO NOT wish this, call 08700 101598. If you would like rules or winners' names, see our web site or send a request with stamped addressed envelope. If you win an INSTANT prize send your claim, with Claim Number to: www.fanz.co.uk, PO Box 28 Northampton NN1 5DS. Helpline: 01604 491185 Winners Line 08700 101597.

PlayStation

COST: **£29.99**
OUT: **NOW**
MULTIPLAYER: **NO**

(c-12): FINAL RESISTANCE

Meet the hero with the worst case of pink-eye you've ever seen

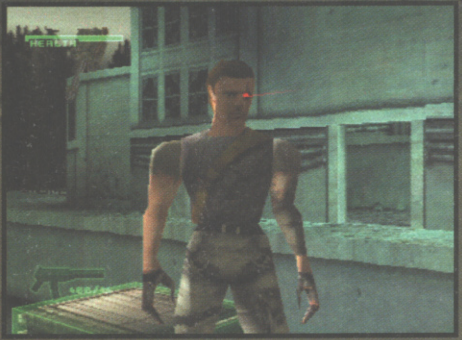


Lieutenant Vaughan has got a great big infra-red laser scanner where his left eye should be. It's the army's fault. After a host of foul alien scum invaded Earth and pretty much took the place over, they made all manner of tasty 'modifications' to turn him into a super-human ET exterminator. This means not only is Vaughan now Earth's last great hope of survival against the rampaging alien scum, he's also been lumped with a boat race even his mum would struggle to love. It's no pain, no gain in probably the last cracking PSone action-adventure blow-out we'll see.

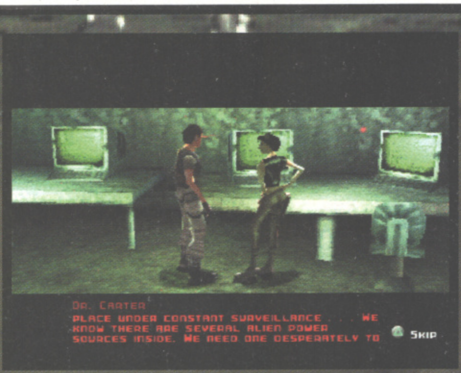
WORDS & SCREENSHOTS: LEE SKITTRELL

MISSION FILTER

(c-12) borrows its structure from the *Syphon Filter* games, offering you mission objectives that are updated as the plot pans out. They're nice and varied too, from rescuing trapped soldiers to blasting massive alien ships out of the sky. The missions are thankfully more forgiving than *SF*s, too, and frustrating moments aren't so common.

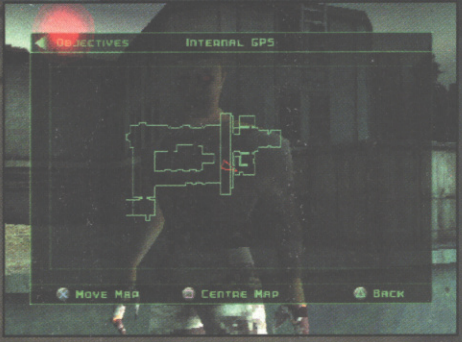


***(c-12)*'s graphics are so detailed and atmospheric that you can easily forgive the odd glitchy moment**



DR. CARTER
PLACE UNDER CONSTANT SURVEILLANCE . . . WE KNOW THERE ARE SEVERAL ALIEN POWER SOURCES INSIDE. WE NEED ONE DESPERATELY TO

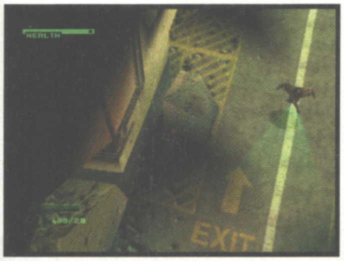
Your fellow officers keep in touch with you throughout the game to update your mission status and offer advice in the field. We like



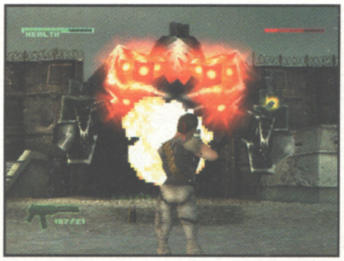
Always remember to check your objective, along with the very handy map and inventory screens

METAL MICKEY

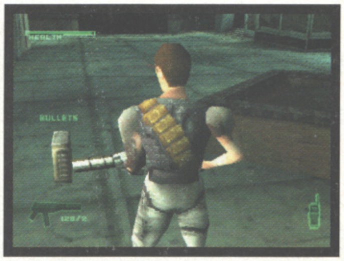
Most of your enemies are vicious metallic droids and cyborgs intent on spilling Vaughan's innards onto the floor. Luckily, you're given lots of lovely weaponry to send them to the big recycler in the sky. From a close-range energy blade to delicious death-dealing grenades and rockets, you'll soon be toasting your automated foes with style.



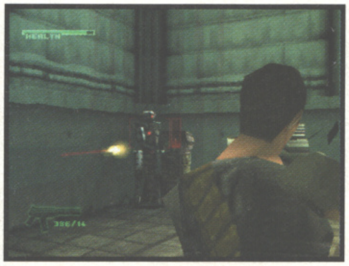
These scout droids are nasty. Sneak past them or they'll raise the alarm and summon back-up



It may look like a boss battle but it's just the first of many massive alien vehicles you have to nuke



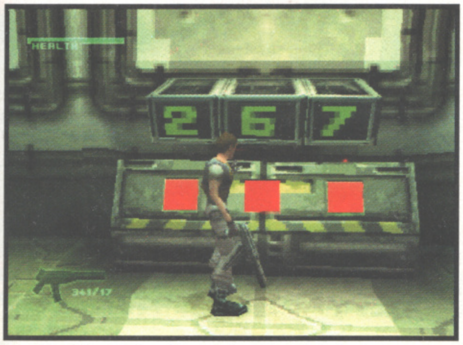
Kill the 'borgs and they'll drop bullets and health. Killing all the enemies can be a mission goal



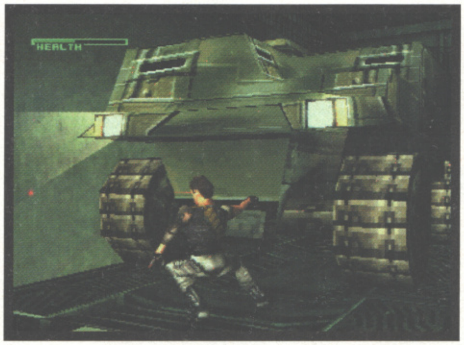
Take out the goons operating these remote turrets and you can do some sniping of your own

HANDY-MAN VAUGHAN

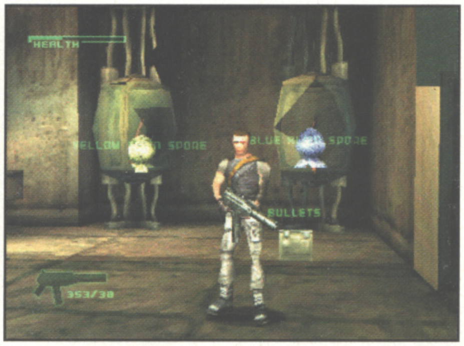
The variety in the missions makes for some top head-scratching action. The puzzles mostly involve finding essential items and moving stuff around the level. Bridges need to be repaired, computers need to be hacked and downed officers need their medicine. And of course, the aliens need their asses kicking.



Cracking this satellite code puzzle is quite a tricky business



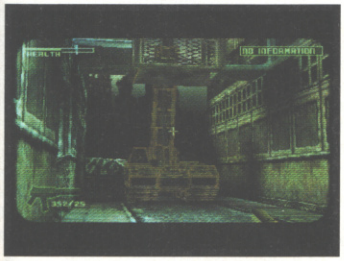
Puzzles are action-based and logical, meaning minimal frustration



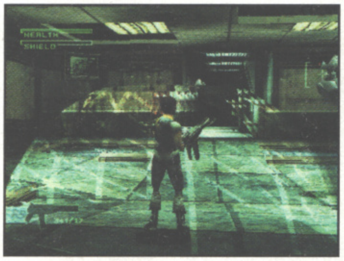
Later on, you collect alien spores and put them to your own use

LEARNING IS FUN

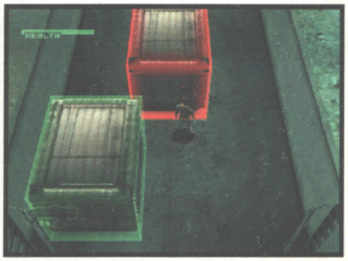
Vaughan learns new skills as you progress, keeping things fresh. Thanks to his genetically engineered strength, the red-eyed wonder is able to shove objects as heavy as tanks around, and the eye implant lets him scan for useful objects and lurking aliens. Even the weapons acquire devastating secondary fire functions as you progress.



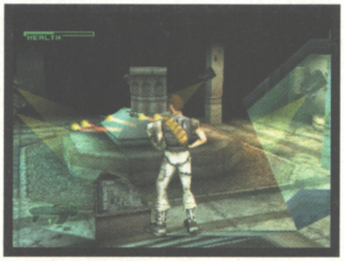
Use your implant scanner often, as it will reveal hidden items and maybe a skulking enemy



Once your alien shield unit is upgraded, you can paralyse enemies with a big discharge of power



Check out stuff glowing green or red, as it means it can be manipulated. Not subtle, but handy



Upgrade the rocket launcher and you can soon fire five missiles at once, *Unreal Tournie*-stylee

WHAT WE THOUGHT...

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY THESE...

***Syphon Filter 2* (PS), *Metal Gear Solid* (PS/PC), *X-Squad* (PS2)**

REWARDING PLAY

(c-12) is an incredible achievement on the aging PSone. The high production values and superbly detailed graphics will hit you first, and it only gets better from there. The game is packed with awesome action set-pieces that may be tough, but always have a pattern of attack to figure out or a logical method to winning. With very little aimless wandering, you're always kept busy and entertained.

KEEP IT SIMPLE

Players annoyed by *Metal Gear Solid*'s endless plotting will find *(c-12)*'s less complicated approach to storytelling a breath of fresh air. The plot is kept mostly simple throughout, with the emphasis on action rather than characterisation. The difficulty setting is just right too, with nicely balanced puzzles and shoot-outs that get progressively harder as you play.

CLASSIC AND CLASSY

(c-12) is fairly derivative, but the elements are put together so well that the relative lack of originality isn't a problem. And it's still giant zero-gravity moon-steps ahead of the few action-adventures out on PS2. This is the perfect game for a quick enjoyable action hit. You won't be playing for months on end, but while it lasts it'll more than suffice.

computer and video games
★★★★

Dreamcast

COST: **£39.99**
OUT: **NOW**
MULTIPLAYER: **1-2**

Dreamcast

COST: **£39.99**
OUT: **APRIL**
MULTIPLAYER: **1-2**

Two of the DC's more bizarre beat 'em ups go head-to-head

FIGHTING VIPERS VS PROJECT JUSTICE

WORDS & SCREENSHOTS: STEVE O

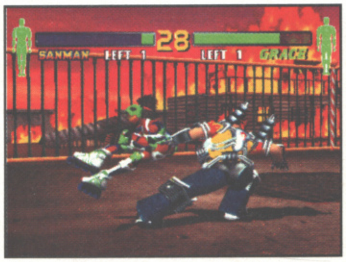
Chances are you never saw the 1997 arcade version of *Fighting Vipers 2* as it only got released in Japan. You may be more familiar with *Fighting Vipers 1*, though, with its moderate success in UK arcades and on the Sega Saturn. What you've got here is a straight port of the obscure coin-op that was big on street gang members clobbering each other. What remains to be seen is whether it's more a harmless grass snake than a deadly King Cobra.

You may well know this game by another name. *Rival Schools* anyone? Because despite its title, *Project Justice* is the spiritual successor to that madcap PlayStation cult classic, being as it is by the same people. It features the same combination of bizarre student scrappers, massively OTT special moves and an innovative team battling system. There's a plot in there somewhere, but whatever it is, you'd probably have to be Japanese as well as slightly mad to understand or appreciate it.

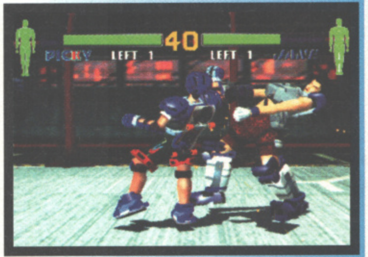
Fighting Vipers 2 features a freak show of bizarre fighters – each into a different area of street culture like skating or rollerblading – beating the hell out of each other in cages.

FACEOFF

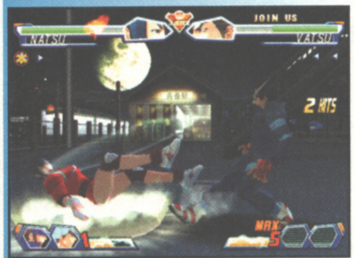
Project Justice coughs up a load of teenagers who have walked out of their school lessons to battle each other in teams of three. It's pure Japanese gaming madness.



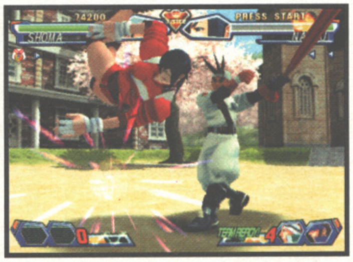
***FV2*'s characters are supposed to be 'street'. Then why's this guy got an engine on his back?**



All the fights are in cages. Good for slamming people's faces into, bad for running away



***PJ*'s lot have all just walked out of school. Looking at them, it must be one of those *special* schools**

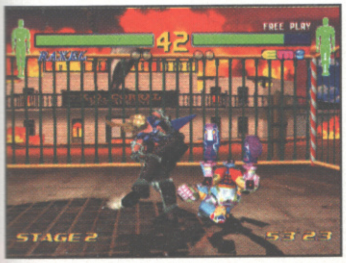


The arenas in *PJ* are all based around typical Japanese youth hangouts, like this church garden

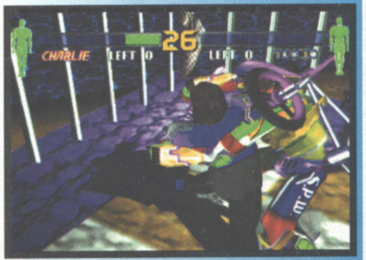
FACES & PLACES

FV2: You start with 11 characters, unlocking more as you go. There are plenty of arenas, each one featuring a cage where the battle takes place.

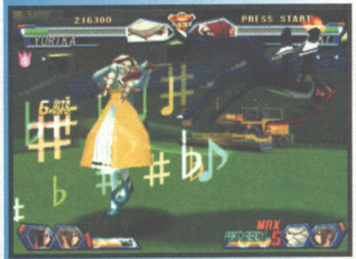
PJ: What an odd bunch. There's a guy with flippers and a swimming cap on, another straight off the baseball pitch and a little girl in badminton gear.



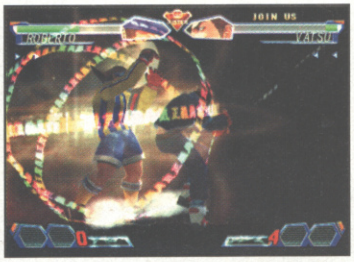
Each character has something strapped to their backs such as a BMX, a guitar or a teddy bear



You fight in a cage inside pretty badly drawn arenas with little going on in the background



If you never thought you'd get kicked in by Vanessa Mae in a judge's wig, think again

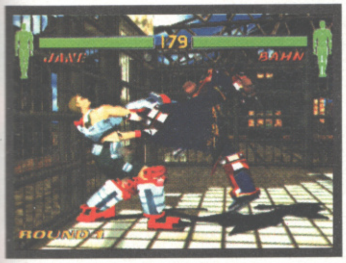


This guy has got a top special move, but since it's in Japanese, who knows what's happening

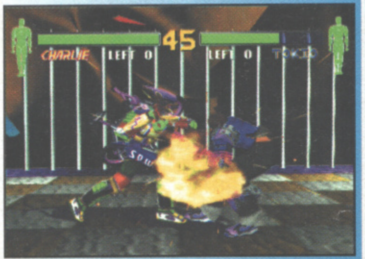
FIGHTING STYLES

Beat 'em ups live and die on the intensity of the fist-breaking action. *FV2* comes off the rails right here with few special effects and clunky combos.

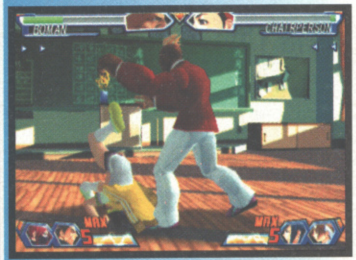
You get a button for each limb in *PJ*, and standard combo moves apply. Best of all is when you trigger a team up attack, bringing your mates into the action.



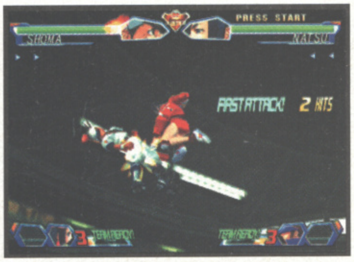
It's a three button system (punch, kick, block). But combos feel clumsy and there's no sidestepping



The bouts can look a little on the dull side by today's standards. The special effects are limited



Fights are smooth and moves flow together like deadly treacle as you make pudding of your foe

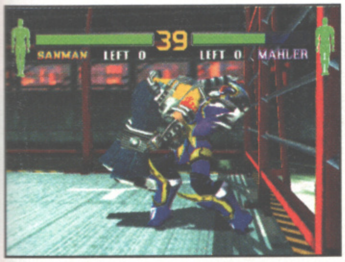


A lot of bouts end up with you both 30ft in the air. It looks cool but can be a little confusing

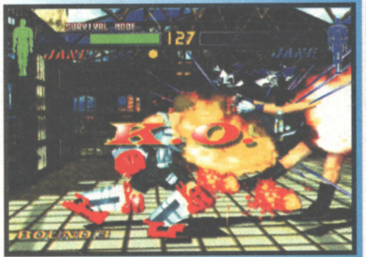
HOUSE SPECIALITIES

Highpoints in *FV2* include the armour system. When your armour has been battered off, you can pull off a last gasp super knock-out.

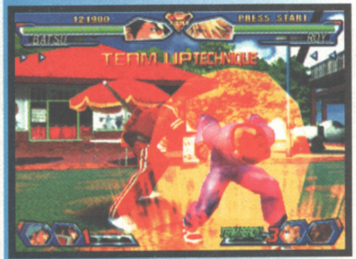
You get three characters on your team in every *PJ* fight. As well as your own combos, You can call them in for some mental special moves.



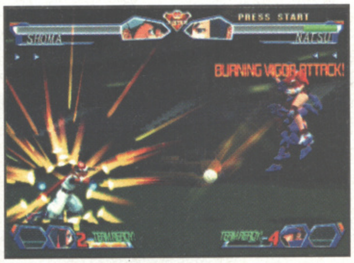
When your opponent's armour marker flashes, you can whip out a power move to finish them off



Getting a KO with the right move can send your opponent flying straight out of the cage



Summon teammates to help out. This guy whacks you with a stick until you unleash a mega assault



Some of the special moves are, well, special. You won't know what's going on but you'll still love it

WHAT WE THOUGHT...

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY THESE...

***Soul Calibur* (DC), *Tekken Tag* (PS2)**

WORTH BUYING?
FV2: It's not like there aren't enough beat 'em ups to choose from on any format these days, let alone the DC. So the fact *FV2* offers very little in the way of snappy visuals, innovative gameplay or hyper-speed carnage doesn't bode well. The game came out in the arcades in 1997 and may have been a blast at the time, it's four years old now for God's sake! The characters are crappy and the fighting system is ungainly, lacking special effects, tasty combos and freedom of movement. This snake isn't deadly at all, it's more of the trouser variety.

computer and video games
★★

WORTH BUYING?
PJ2: Beat 'em ups don't come much madder than this, without question. Pull a special move to make a young girl drag a whiteboard into the arena which you read to pump up your energy. Or hit a combo that brings your mate with a baseball bat into view. You pitch your opponent at him and he hits him for a home run. It's packed with special moves, blazing special effects and plenty of off the wall characters to play around with. Though it may be that little bit too Japanese for many, for DC owners tired with *Soul Calibur* and *DoA2*, this is the next best thing.

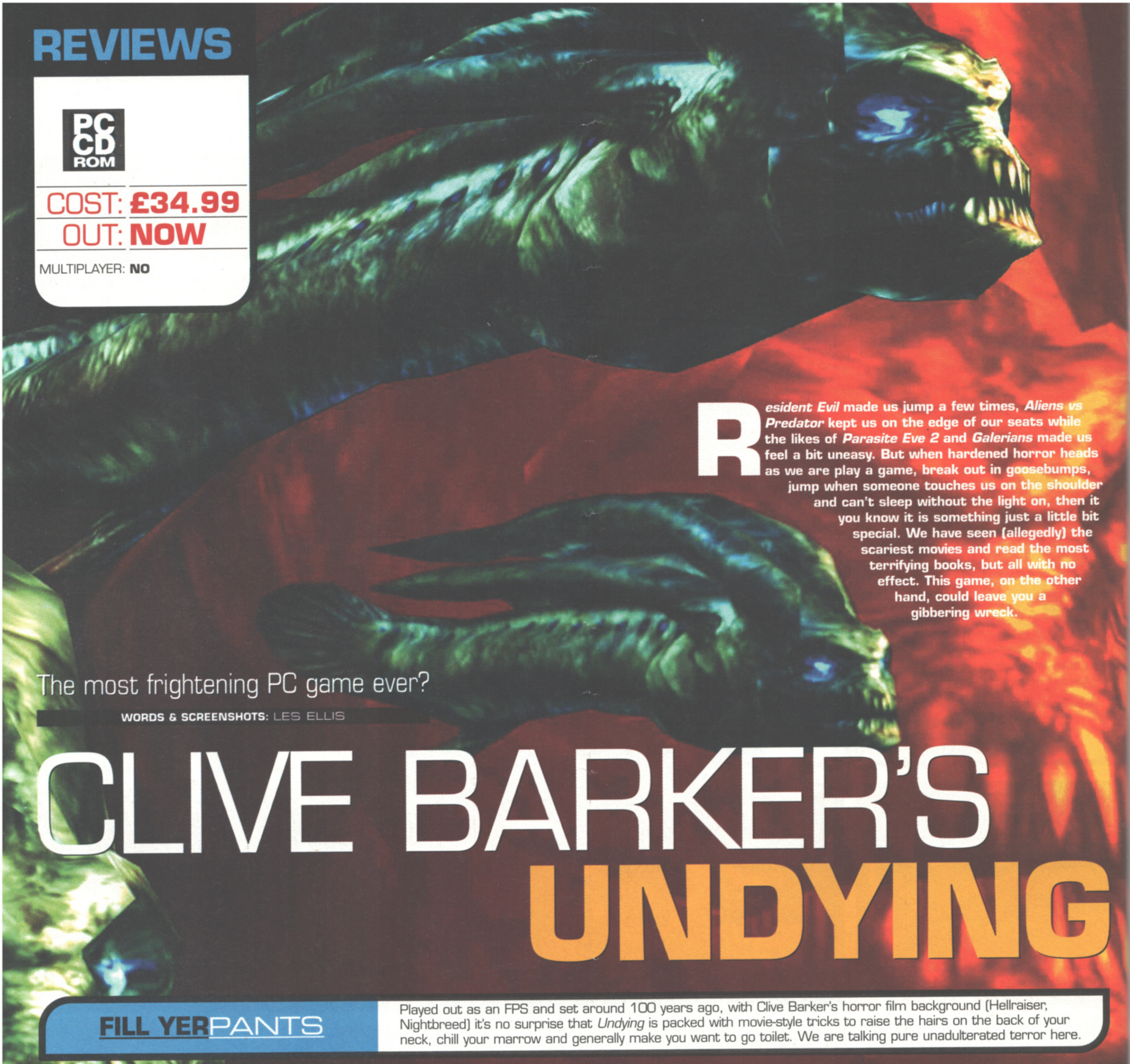
computer and video games
★★★

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY THESE...

***Rival Schools* (PS1), *Jo Jo's Bizarre Adventure* (PS1)**

PC CD ROM

COST: **£34.99**
OUT: **NOW**
MULTIPLAYER: **NO**



CLIVE BARKER'S UNDYING

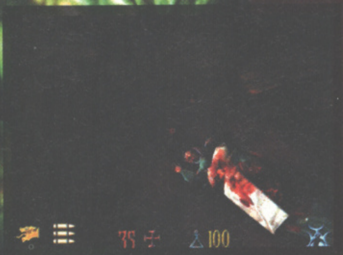
The most frightening PC game ever?

WORDS & SCREENSHOTS: LES ELLIS

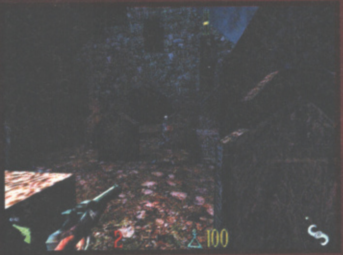
Resident Evil made us jump a few times, *Aliens vs Predator* kept us on the edge of our seats while the likes of *Parasite Eve 2* and *Galerians* made us feel a bit uneasy. But when hardened horror heads as we are play a game, break out in goosebumps, jump when someone touches us on the shoulder and can't sleep without the light on, then it you know it is something just a little bit special. We have seen (allegedly) the scariest movies and read the most terrifying books, but all with no effect. This game, on the other hand, could leave you a gibbering wreck.

FILL YERPANTS

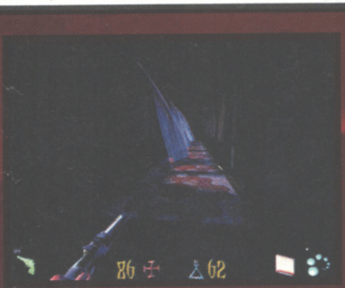
Played out as an FPS and set around 100 years ago, with Clive Barker's horror film background (Hellraiser, Nightbreed) it's no surprise that *Undying* is packed with movie-style tricks to raise the hairs on the back of your neck, chill your marrow and generally make you want to go toilet. We are talking pure unadulterated terror here.



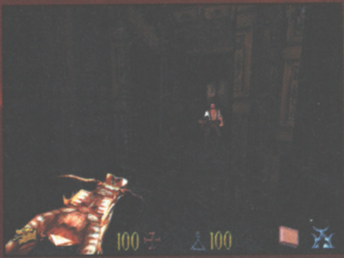
She's not half the girl she used to be. We love the squelchy sounds when you walk through a body, leaving bloody footprints behind you



The locations have been chosen to fire up all our fears – gothic mansions, graveyards, mausoleums and so on. And all depicted in such gorgeous detail



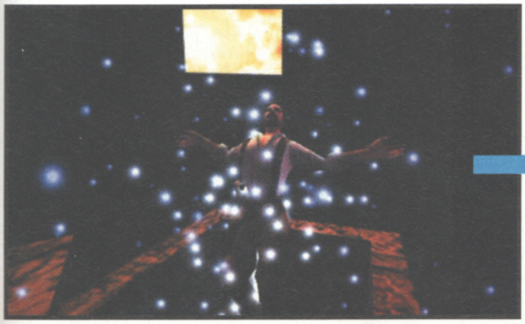
Sound plays a huge role in the game. It's not what you *see* that'll really scare you, it's what you *hear*. Some of the noises will chill you to the bone



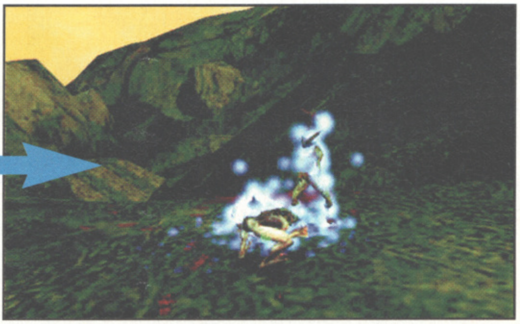
Nothing is as it seems. Some mirrors you can jump through and others – well, let's just say you won't want to admire your reflection for long

I PUT A SPELL ON YOU

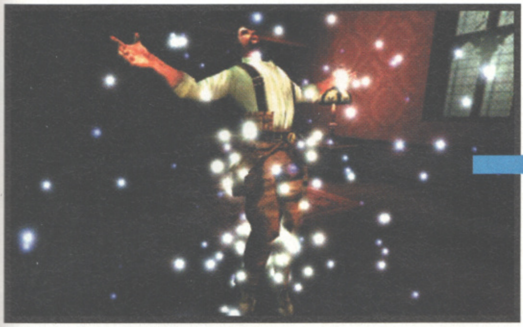
You can use more than just brute force to whack some of these satanic monstrosities. Just make like David Copperfield and weave some magic.



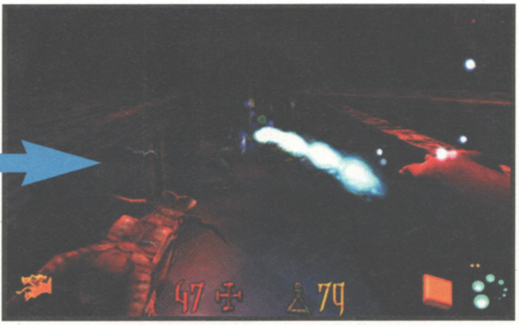
A top spell that'll you'll use plenty is Invoke. This bit of hocus-pocus lets you resurrect a fallen enemy to serve for a short time as your undead bodyguard



But for an interesting side effect to Invoke, you should see what it does to something that is already alive – ouch, now that's gonna leave a mark



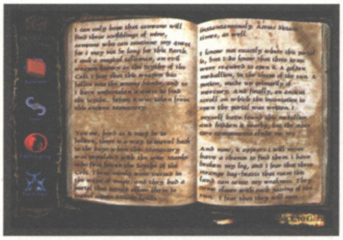
Ectoplasm serves as a useful alternative to your main gun. If bullets just don't do the job on those demons, this stuff ought to finish 'em off in style



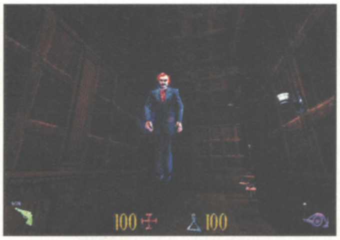
Problem is, you need to get pretty close to get a hit with this otherwordly goo. And when you're talking hell-sent demons, close ain't a good place to be

HORROR STORY

As it's a one-player game only, *Undying* has a strong plot running through it that means sometimes you have to think before you shoot. Packed with evil twists and turns, it keeps things nice and tense.



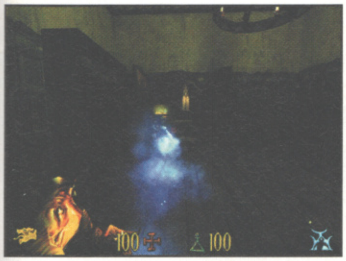
You find pages all over the place to update your journal, and all key events are recorded here



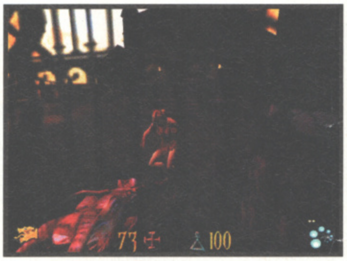
And there are always people around who want to talk to you – some are nice, some aren't

MORE "HOLY S#!T" MOMENTS

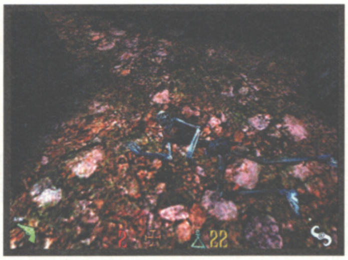
The intense atmosphere, mind-warping sound effects (play this with headphones on, we dare you) and deep gameplay make this much more than just another first-person blast. This is about as frightening as videogames get. Bring it on, we say.



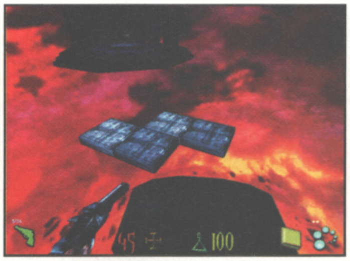
Doors open and close when you're nowhere near them. Scary. Especially when something jumps out



You see characters and monsters you know you need to kill, but can't get to them



The way the skeletons claw themselves out of the ground in the cemetery is very nasty



Very Indiana Jones. You have to get across but the platform doesn't appear until you step off

WHAT WE THOUGHT...

SCARY AS HELL

The first time you set eyes on the resplendent gothic mansion or the graveyard in all its gory glory you find the kind of beautiful attention to detail that makes your eyes cry out for more. Just look at the pictures hanging in the main hall of the house – stunning. Whichever of the locations you are in, this detail just doesn't drop. It all helps to create the most choking atmosphere you'll find this side of the Moon.

AURAL PLEASURE

Ghostly voices, creaking passages, scary creature noises and a soundtrack that constantly manages to shred your nerves – you feel permanently unsettled until you realise the truth that you are genuinely scared. It's not so much what you can see, but what your mind makes of what you can't. *Undying* takes all the tricks movies use to frighten you, and then improves on them, throwing in a fine first-person shooter at the same time. It may not be as fast as *Quake 3*, but it's got much more impact and will suck you in and spit you out a quivering mess.

computer and video Games
★★★★★

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY THESE...

***Resident Evil Nemesis* (PSone), *Aliens vs Predator* (PC), *Perfect Dark* (N64)**

COMPETITION

We've got five copies of this awesome adventure to give away. Just tell us:

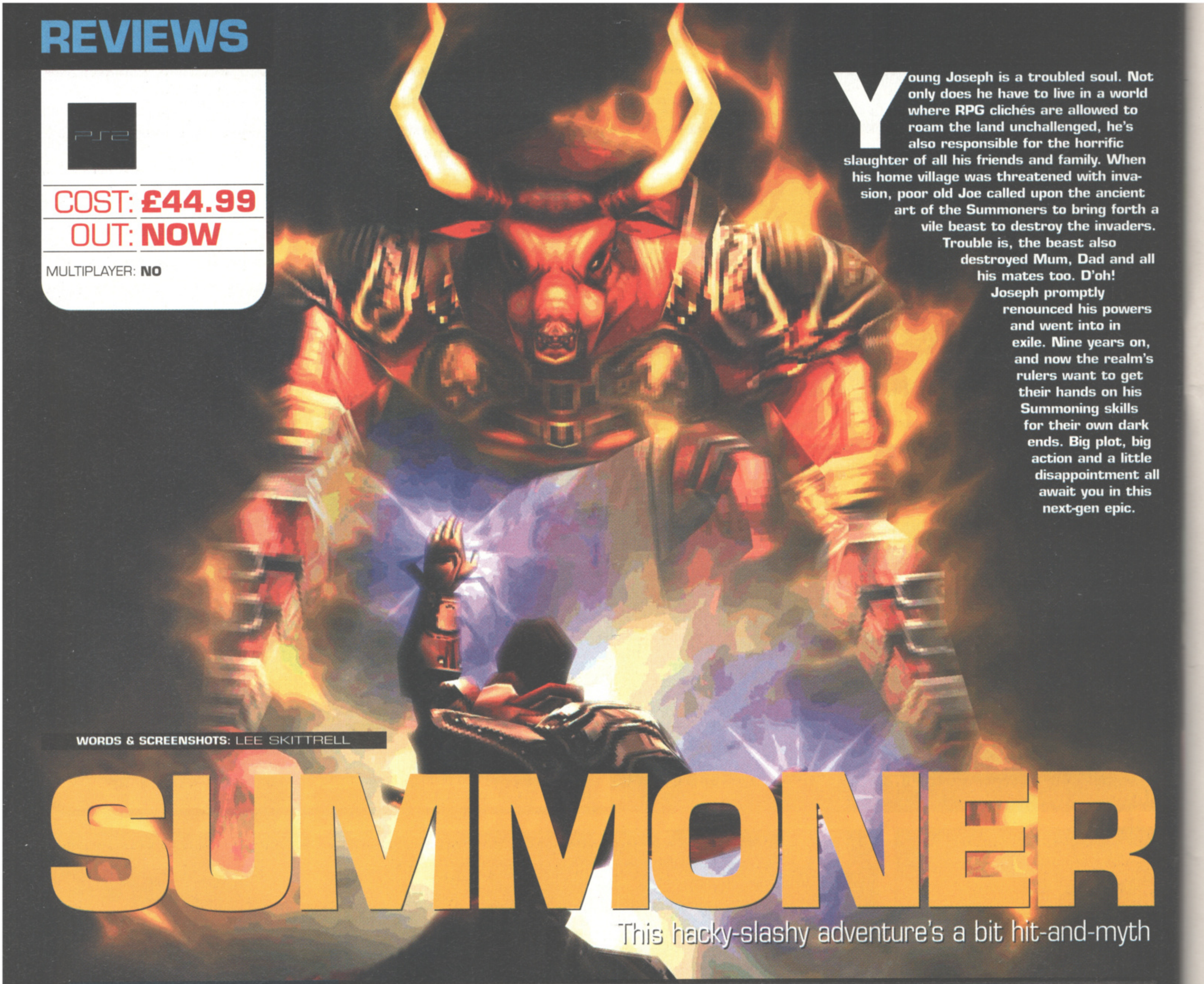
Clive Barker directed which of these films?

A/The Exorcist
B/Hellraiser
C/Salem's Lot

Entries marked 'I'm scared!' to: CVG, 30 Cleveland Street, London, W1P 5FF

PS2

COST: **£44.99**
OUT: **NOW**
MULTIPLAYER: **NO**



Young Joseph is a troubled soul. Not only does he have to live in a world where RPG clichés are allowed to roam the land unchallenged, he's also responsible for the horrific slaughter of all his friends and family. When his home village was threatened with invasion, poor old Joe called upon the ancient art of the Summoners to bring forth a vile beast to destroy the invaders. Trouble is, the beast also destroyed Mum, Dad and all his mates too. D'oh! Joseph promptly renounced his powers and went into in exile. Nine years on, and now the realm's rulers want to get their hands on his Summoning skills for their own dark ends. Big plot, big action and a little disappointment all await you in this next-gen epic.

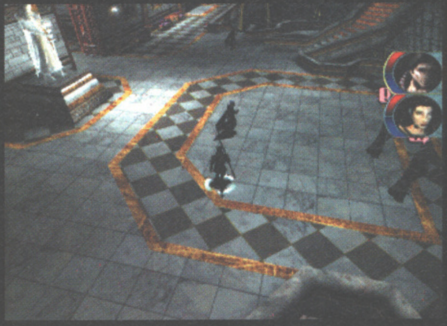
WORDS & SCREENSHOTS: LEE SKITTRELL

SUMMONER

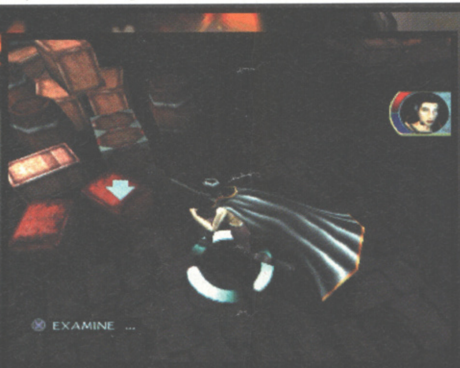
This hacky-slashy adventure's a bit hit-and-myth

LOOKSNICE?

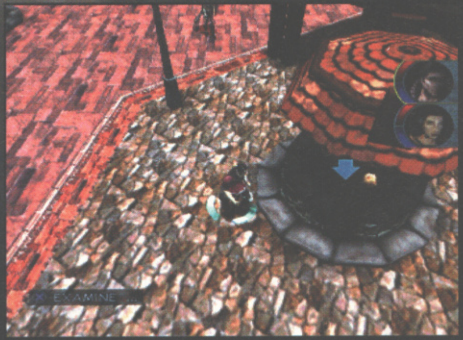
As nice as *Summoner* sometimes looks, our screenshots may be a touch misleading. *Summoner* suffers from perhaps the shortest draw distance we've ever seen and there's not even any of that age-old fog to mask it. It's such a shame more work wasn't put in to fixing this problem as it destroys the otherwise believable fantasy environment of the game.



To conceal the pop-up, the camera is set pointing floorward. You can change the angle but checking your surroundings is still frustrating



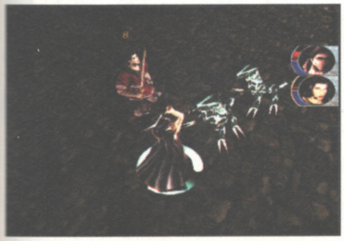
There's lots of detail in your immediate surroundings and you should always remember to examine suspect boxes for hidden items



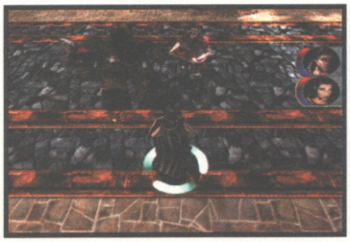
The game environments are vast and can be daunting at first, especially as there are so many people milling around

FIGHTING FORCE

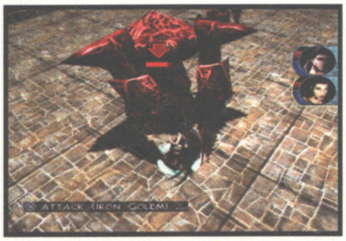
Summoner's combat system is an odd choice for a console RPG. You have to chain attacks together using the D-pad when the icon appears on screen. It's fiddly at first but rewards perseverance. If you really can't be bothered, you can set chain attacks to automatic, which lets you take more of a backseat in the action.



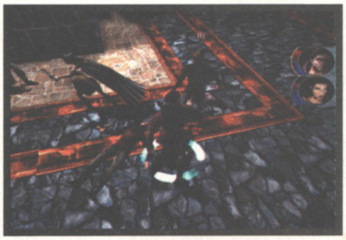
You can control the camera during battle for lovely close-up shots of bestial carnage. Yes!



Some of these Golems will help you out, but mostly they just want to break your head open



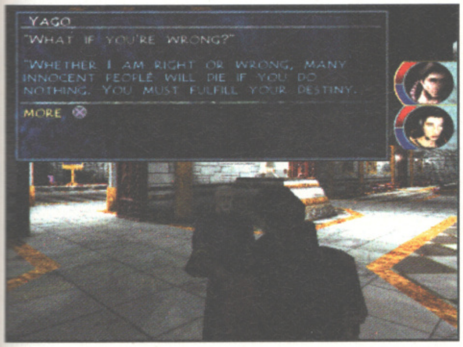
After lengthy dungeoneering, you're treated to tough boss battles. Make sure you're levelled up



The best thing in battle is that you can command individual party members for more strategic fights

SUMMONING SECRETS

Joseph starts the game all on his lonesome, but he'll soon meet fellow adventurers to help him in battle. But the coolest controllable characters are the creatures and forces Joseph can summon. Bag some Summoning rings and let the vicious warriors come forth.

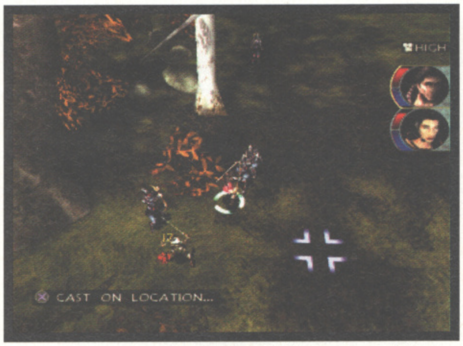


YAGO

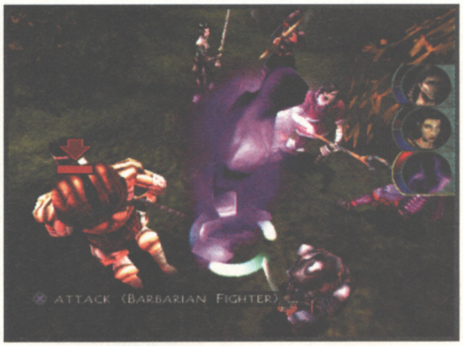
"WHAT IF YOU'RE WRONG?"

"WHETHER I AM RIGHT OR WRONG, MANY INNOCENT PEOPLE WILL DIE IF YOU DO NOTHING. YOU MUST FULFILL YOUR DESTINY.

Sneak your way into the palace to find your old buddy Yago, who will give you your first Summoning ring. Thanks pal



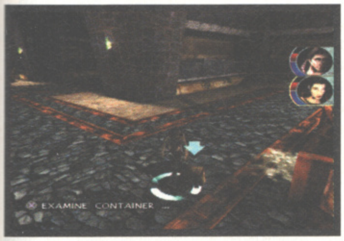
Wearing the ring, cast the summoning spell on land near the battle to get hired help. Looks like the Wermacht got here first, though



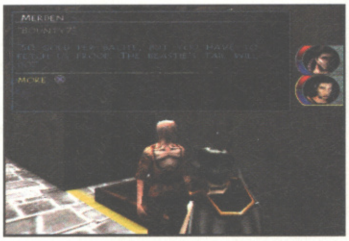
The Purple Prince of Pop slays enemies with funky dance moves. Er, not. This big dude's your summoned demon. Use him wisely

VALUE FOR MONEY

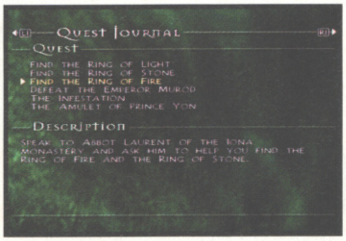
No-one could ever accuse *Summoner* of being stingy on substance. Aside from the massive quest and the sprawling story, the game offers huge areas to explore, myriad mad folk to chat to, and sub-plots galore. To help you keep track of your actions, there's also a handy Quest Journal.



One of the market traders will reward you for picking up some contraband salt



Be sure to collect the Bacite tails when battling in the sewers to sell to this hard-to-find guy



QUEST JOURNAL

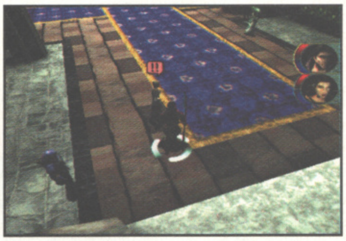
QUEST

FIND THE RING OF LIGHT
FIND THE RING OF STONE
▸ FIND THE RING OF FIRE
DEFEAT THE EMPEROR MUROD
THE INFESTATION
THE AMULET OF PRINCE YON

DESCRIPTION

SPEAK TO ABBOT LAURENT OF THE IONA MONASTERY AND ASK HIM TO HELP YOU FIND THE RING OF FIRE AND THE RING OF STONE.

The Quest Journal is constantly updated and will prove an invaluable aid in your adventures



Important people have exclamation marks above their heads to make sure you chat to them

WHAT WE THOUGHT...

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY THESE...

***Final Fantasy IX* (PSone), *Zelda: Majora's Mask* (N64)**

THE TRUTH

Summoner is a tad disappointing. The story, characters and locations have an old-hat feel that may appeal to dedicated RPGers but won't win over more casual players. Before long, the technical flaws become a problem – especially that draw distance and the camera angles – as they scupper the illusion of being part of an epic world. Things get very text-heavy in places too, and talking to everyone, searching for clues and help, can be a chore.

A GOOD GAME

Despite these shortcomings, it *is* playable – once you've trudged through the earlier, less exciting sections. Summoning beasts is great and learning to strategically command your party in battle is rewarding. The multiple sub-quests are mostly good fun too, though sometimes difficult to complete due to the sprawling, over-populated environments to explore.

BEST PS2 RPG

Summoner manages to earn the 'Best RPG on PS2' title, though there's no real competition as yet. That said, it's likely only to appeal to fans of more traditional adventures and those of an Orcish persuasion. You'll have to be patient enough to suffer the early sections before the game actually gets any good, but how many players will bother? This simply isn't a game for everyone, so we really recommend you rent it before you splash your cash.

computer and video games

★★★

PlayStation

COST: **£39.99**
OUT: **NOW**
MULTIPLAYER: **1-2**

DUKE NUKEM
LAND OF THE BABES

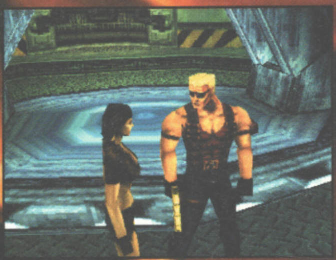
WORDS & SCREENSHOTS:MAURA SUTTON

Size does matter and Duke's got the biggest

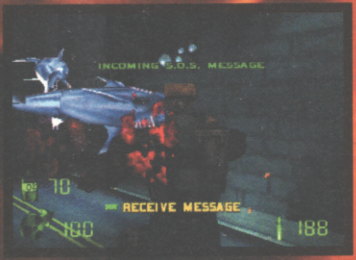
It's a post-nuclear nightmare. Aliens have taken over the Earth and killed all the men. The women have been captured and turned into love slaves for the sole purpose of breeding more foul space spawn. Even worse, chocolate has been abolished. The feisty Earth chicks ain't taking it lying down though. They've formed the Unified Babe Resistance movement in an attempt to take back the planet. The girls know that a good man is hard to find, so they send their leader back in time to enlist the help of Old Iron Ba...er..Biceps. Can our hero resist the opportunity to kick some alien butt and schmooze a few hot babes on the way? Will the plot get any cheesier? Does it really matter? Come get some!

LET'S SHOOT SOMETHING

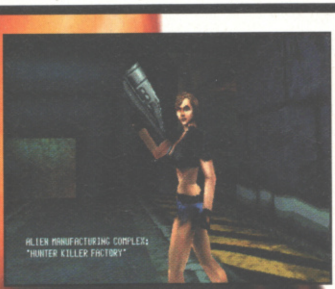
You can bank on a Duke Nukem game having a full-on sci-fi story featuring a lot of mutant aliens to kill and a lot of babes to check out. *POTB* is no exception. Here, Dukey agrees to help the babes by searching out the big alien cheese and battering his festering butt.



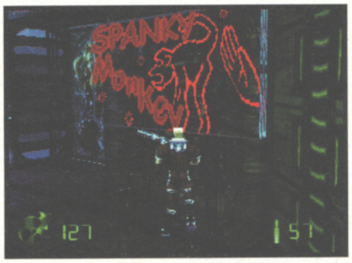
While kicking back in his fave strip joint, a babe from the future drops in to enlist Duke's help



Underwater levels. We hate 'em, and *LOTB* has plenty of 'em. At least he's got scuba gear now



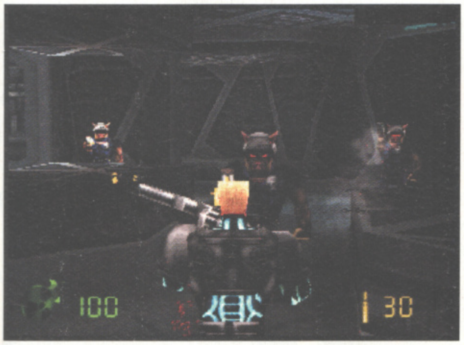
What may look like a hot piece of tail is in fact a deadly terminator immune to Duke's charms



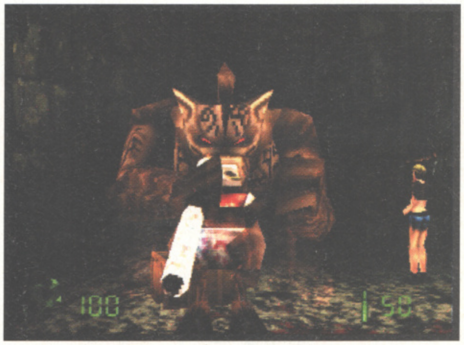
Spanky Monkey, an alien boob bar on the Den of Sin space station. Damn fine place. Subtle humour, eh?

A RIGHT PIG'S EAR

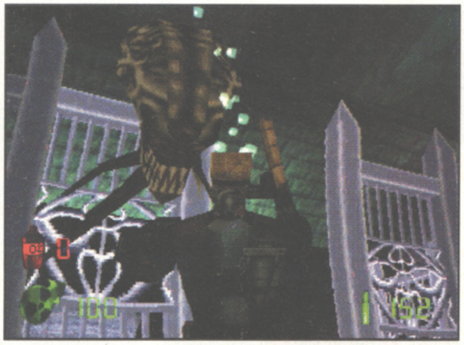
Duke games always have great aliens and bad guys. We're happy to say that those legendary L.A.R.D. porkers are back, as well as a whole new menagerie of hybrid animal nasties created by the aliens. The mutant beasts guard the babes on earth while the tentacle wavers kick back and enjoy a life of vice on their orbiting Den of Sin.



The Pig Cops are back! Everyone's favourite gaming gammon returns



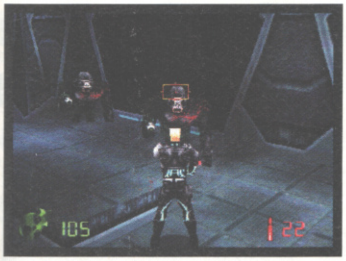
The Feral Pigs are bigger and nastier than their L.A.R.D. kin



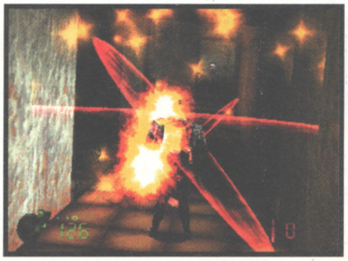
Remember those fiendish octopus-things from the previous games?

LOCK AND LOAD

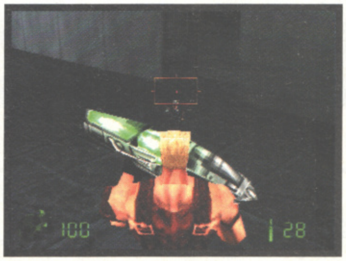
Like all *real* men, Duke loves big guns. Once again, all the favourites are here from the previous games, plus a couple of new frag-friendly devices. Keep your eyes open for fake walls and suspicious cracks, as some of the most awesome weapons are hidden away in secret places along with lots of other power-ups and treasures.



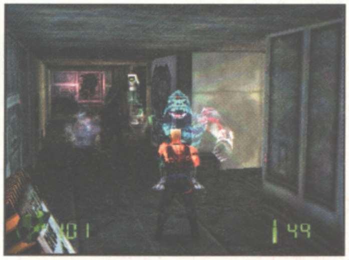
Meet interesting new monsters and turn them into walking sieves with the combat shotgun



The RPG is an awesome shoulder-mounted missile launcher. Not for use in confined spaces. D'oh!



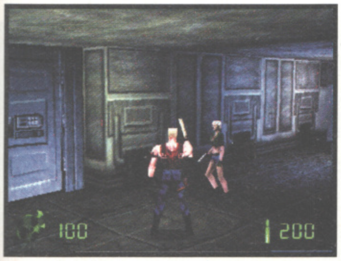
Use the cunning Shrinker gun to reduce your enemies to the size of a pea, then step on them



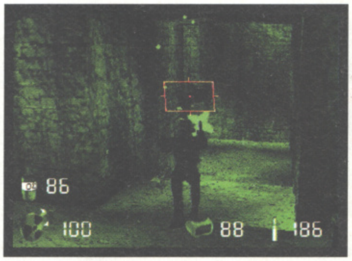
Freeze enemies with one blast before shattering them into a million ice cubes with your boot

NO TIME TO BLEED

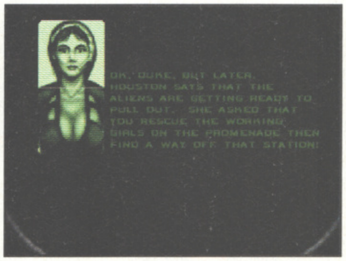
Land of the Babes gameplay stays true to the Duke formula. There's lots of shooting, puzzle-solving and platform jumping. But there are several new twists and turns. Duke now has an Ego metre instead of a Life Bar. If he gets shot, his Ego goes down, and when he frags enemies he gets an Ego boost. Neat.



Duke's Ego is boosted by killin', peein', and chatting up babes. If it reaches zero, he's dead

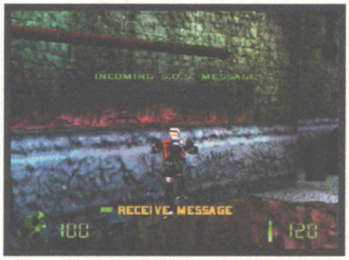


Duke likes nothing better than fumbling around in the dark, so these night goggles come in handy



OK, DUKE, BUT LATER.
HOUSTON SAYS THAT THE
ALIENS ARE GETTING READY TO
PULL OUT. SHE ASKED THAT
YOU RESCUE THE WORKING
GIRLS ON THE PROMENADE THEN
FIND A WAY OFF THAT STATION!

Duke talks to Babe leader Jane via the S.O.S Comms link. No, it's not a *Metal Gear* rip-off, ok?



The jetpack allows Duke to explore all those secret nooks and crannies he can't reach on foot

WHAT WE THOUGHT...

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY THESE...

***Duke Nukem 3D* (PC), *Duke Nukem Zero Hour* (N64)**

GIMME SOME SUGAR, BABY

Let's face it, Da Dook is a legend in his own lunchbox. You only have to hear that testosterone soaked voice booming out those outrageous one-liners to be in pig-mashing heaven. In *LOTB* he still drools, leers, and pees like a true macho man and there are loads of in-jokes for hardcore fans. It's sick, twisted and frequently disturbing. We like.

YOU'RE F'UGLY

To say this is the best looking *Duke Nukem* game yet on the PSone isn't saying much. In terms of style, the original PC game still wins hands down over all the console versions. And as the PS2 starts to take over, third-person shooters like this are starting to look increasingly dated. *LOTB* just about escapes looking old and hoary, but it's a close run thing.

IT'S ASS KICKIN' TIME

LOTB is one of the best fun PSone action games around and is well easy to get into. The well planned levels, life-saving Continues and strategically placed Re-Entry points ensure you don't get too frustrated. That said, this is no wussy walk in the park. It is still challenging enough to keep you swearing like the great man himself and should take you weeks to play through. Multiplayer and Cheat options round off a pleasing romp.

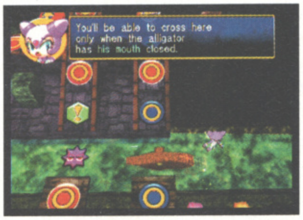
computer and video
Games
★★★★

Dreamcast

COST: £39.99

OUT: NOW

MULTIPLAYER: **1-4**



You'll be able to cross here only when the alligator has his mouth closed.

The fairy offers helpful hints for each world

The intro is stunning: top cartoon action ahoy as you're taken on a rollercoaster ride of board game pleasure

With a few mates round, mini-games can turn into an insane, frenzied free-for-all

......Here you go!!

One of the many cute little animations in the game. Pointless, but you'll get a bonus

SONIC SHUFFLE

Periods of party pleasure, but a solo no-no

WORDS & SCREENSHOTS JOHNNY MINKLEY

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

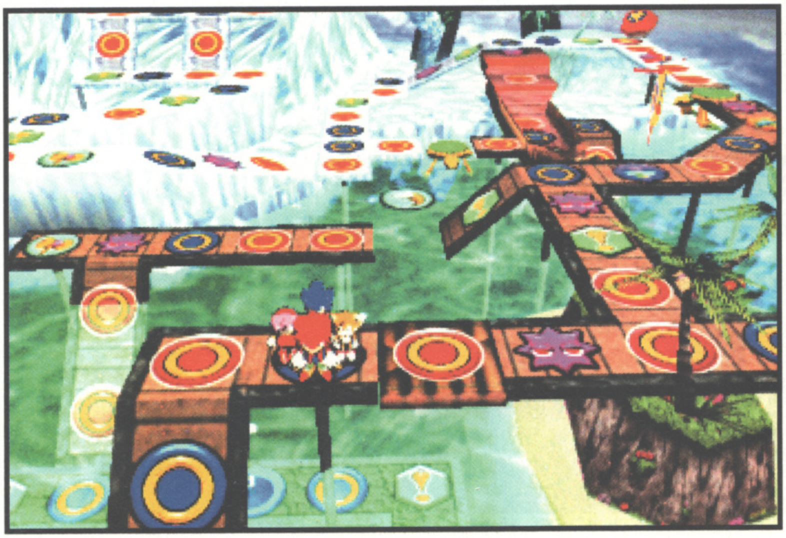
Once upon a time there was no such thing as a videogame. That's right, long before Mario was even a twinkle in Miyamoto-san's eye, folk passed the time playing something called a board game. It had no plug, you couldn't 'frag' on it, and it didn't play DVDs. Ridiculous, we know, yet it managed to entertain for countless hours, bringing families together in rapturous bliss.

Well, it seems that in this time of nostalgia, Sega has looked fondly into the distant past to bring you a slice of wholesome family fun from days of yore. Cue the spiky blue one and his coterie of cutesy critters in their own virtual board game.

CARTOON CAPERS

As you can gather from the screenshots, visually *Sonic Shuffle* is the mutt's nuts, using stunning *Jet Set Radio*-stylee cell-shading techniques to give an incredible cartoon-like feel to the proceedings. Sound-wise, it's all as twee as you'd expect, with lots of twinkly sound effects and cheesy choons.

Move onto this space for a ring reward

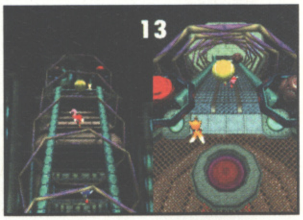


MULTIPLAYER MADNESS

It plays like a turn-based board game with up to four of you choosing a character – initially Sonic, Knuckles, Amy or Tails.

Players move around the board by selecting numbered cards, the number corresponding to the amount of spaces you can move, and the ultimate aim in each stage is to obtain Precioustones. Despite the turn-based nature of the main game, when one of the frequent mini-games (there are 50) is triggered, everyone is involved, and they can be fiercely competitive.

The old glue-on-shoe-soles gag was received with little mirth



Push balls down stairs to splat Knuckles

WORTH PLAYING?

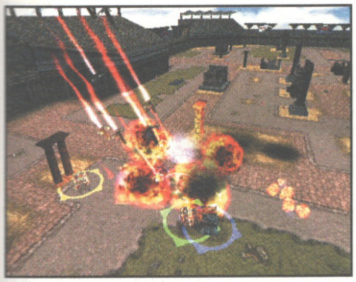
Though fun for a while, there are certain problems which undermine *SS*'s all-the-fun-of-the-fair image. Firstly, if you're as popular as Darius from Popstars, you'll struggle to find much in the way of solo enjoyment, as playing a party game against the CPU can be seriously tedious.

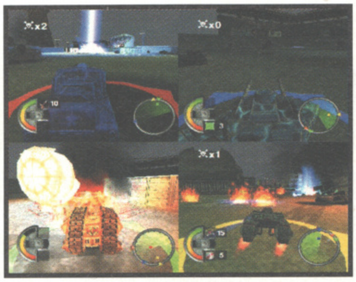
And while multiplayer is a lark for a time, the competitive element is ruined by the fact that whoever is nearest to the Precioustone when it's placed will get it nine times out of ten. Thus, though *Shuffle* can be a laugh for short periods of time, if a little more care had been taken, it could've been stacks more fun.

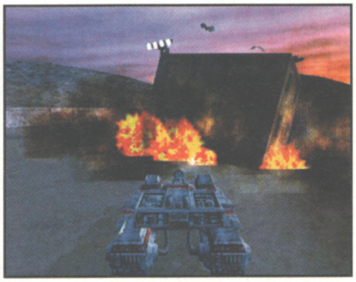
computer and video Games

★★★

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY THESE...
Mario Party (N64), *Crash Bash* (PS), *Beauty & The Beast* (GBC)







PS2

COST: **£39.99**

OUT: **MAR**

MULTIPLAYER: **1-4**

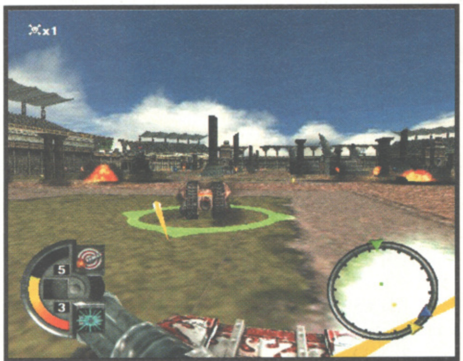
WORLD DESTRUCTION LEAGUE: THUNDER TANKS

Get tanked up with a load of mates

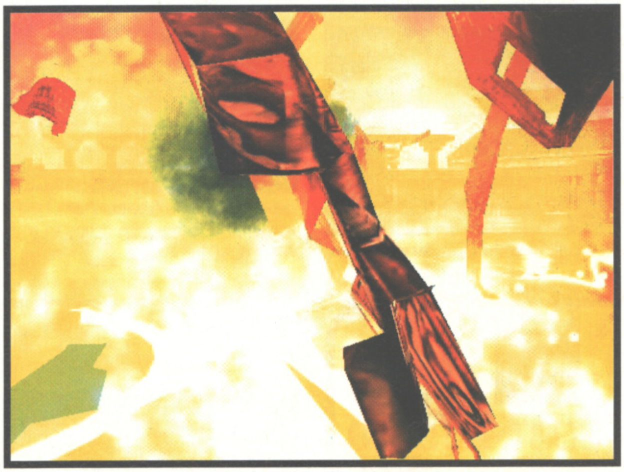
WORDS & SCREENSHOTS: DEANOID

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW
Humans have an inherent need to hunt. And since the closest we come to tracking and killing animals for food these days is when the supermarket cocks up the signposts for frozen chicken, we tend to want to kill each other instead. Guns can only get so big before you get knackered carrying them, so *WDL Thunder Tanks* puts you in a mobile cannon and provides vast arenas for some therapeutic slaughter.

DESTROY THE SCENERY
You drive around killing things. Miss a rival tank with a rocket salvo and the chances are you'll make a mess of whatever scenery you hit. The tanks thrash around the arenas, and the weapon pick-ups lying around keep things spicy. The main third-person view looks nice, but restricts your view, so the old school top-down view is better.



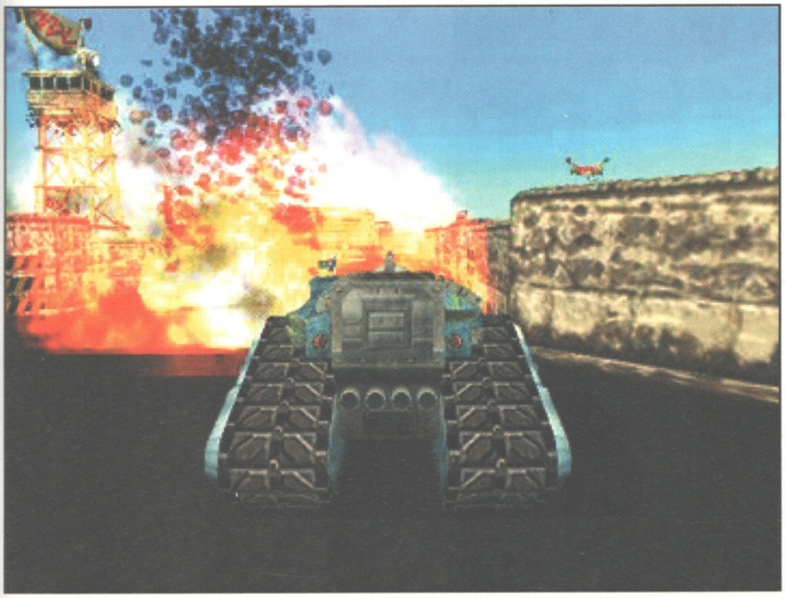
You can change the camera view to suit your taste. Top down is best



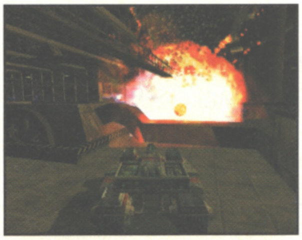
When things explode in *WDL TT*, we're talking serious fireworks time. Look at that baby go

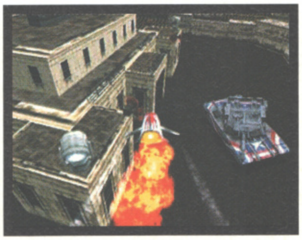
GET THE CHAPS ROUND
Single player spins the predictable 'tournament' yarn, but there's little satisfaction in chasing down computer tanks and baking them in white napalm. Far better is the four-player option, which serves up some of the most accessible, yet manic multiplayer action on PS2. The tanks can be tricky to control, but that's the reason sports cars have wheels and not tracks.

WORTH PLAYING?
Thunder Tanks is uncomplicated, flashy, noisy fun. Played solo, it's going to get boring pretty quickly, as any deathmatch game does. A bit more innovation with the game options would've helped, but all you get is the likes of Domination and CTF. Get the lads round though, and it's the perfect party game. Simple to explain, and violent and backstabbing enough to have your sofa bouncing with human rage.



Each tank has different handling, armour and armaments. This fat mutha sports a tasty flamethrower to BBQ your foe





A guided missile special weapon homes in

computer and video Games

★★★

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY THESE...
Return Fire (PSone), *Quake 3 Arena* (PC, DC)

PS2 | PC CD ROM

COST: **£39.99 / £29.99**

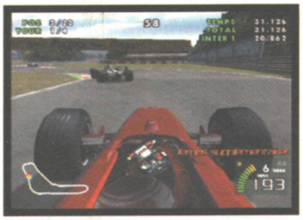
OUT: **NOW**

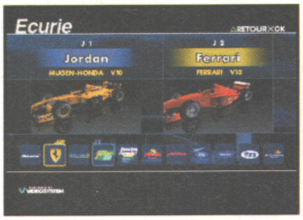
MULTIPLAYER: **1-2 (PS2)**
1-22 ONLINE (PC)

F1 RACING CHAMPIONSHIP

An F1 game? It's been such a long time since we've seen one of those. How refreshing

WORDS & SCREENSHOTS: JOHNNY MINKLEY





All the official cars are present and correct

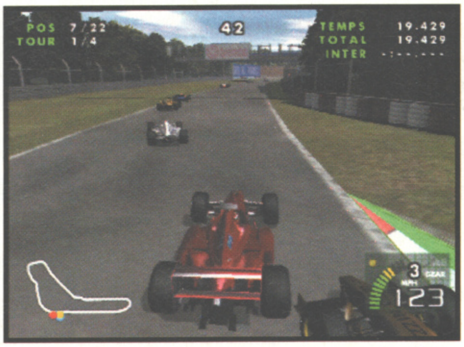
WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Pardon our cynicism, but there are an inordinate amount of F1 games kicking around at the moment. The vast majority of these being mediocre, and the vast majority of these offering pretty much the same thing. Thus, the arrival of another batch this month provides the same degree of shock and wonder as Les turning up to work wearing black.

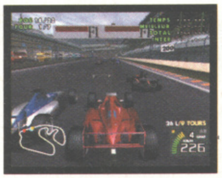
What makes this effort different is that rather than feature all the drivers and teams of this season, it uses the ones from the 1999 season. Not a great start.

FRAME SHAME

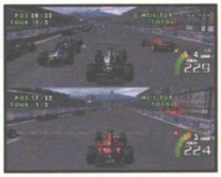
Graphically, the PS2 *F1RC* looks OK, though it won't leave you slack-jawed in awe. Real-time reflections and lack of pop-up are impressive, and it all shifts along at quite a pace. The cars and the tracks are detailed enough, but as soon as you get more than a few cars on screen the frame rate drops to a cripplingly slow jerk.



Much time and effort has been spent recreating cars and tracks from the Formula 1 circuit. Reckon you know which one this is?



Take the wheel of a Ferrari and scythe through the competition



Split-screen on PS2 is spoiled by a terribly jumpy frame rate

WORTH PLAYING?

The main problem with *F1RC* is the handling of the cars. More specifically, turning is an absolute pain, and you'll curse time and again as your leaden car struggles around every corner.

The PC version has the opposite problem, with handling being super-sensitive, resulting in repeated, rage-inducing crashes. Developers may boast of heightened realism, but that sort of thing can really sap the fun out of the experience.

Frankly, there are too many F1 games out there, and this doesn't have anything new to recommend itself over the competition.

computer and video games

★★★

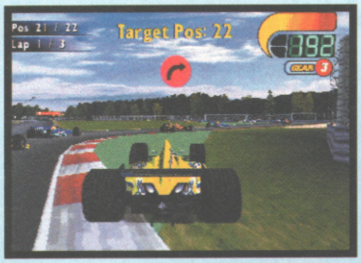
IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY THESE...
F1 Championship 2000 (PS2)

PlayStation

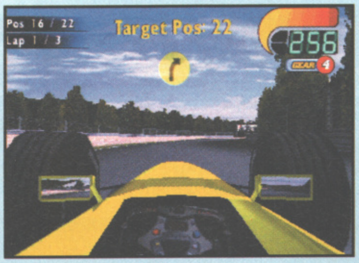
COST: **£29.99**

OUT: **MAR**

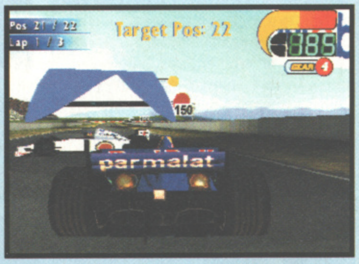
MULTIPLAYER: **1-2**



Arcade mode lets you cut corners across the grass



The in-car view makes it extremely hard to see



You must meet a series of targets in Arcade mode

F1 WORLD GRAND PRIX

Another average F1 game? Surely not...

WORDS & SCREENSHOTS: JOHNNY MINKLEY

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Zzzzzz... w-what?...oh sorry... (yawn)... Yes, that's right – another F1 game folks. But as professional journalists we must, of course, get rid of any preconceptions and come at every game with an open mind. So here we go.

F1WGP, like much of the competition, is split into an Arcade and a Simulation mode. The former does exactly what it says on the tin and could be off a second rate coin-op with its cheesy, over-enthusiastic in-game announcer. The more realistic Simulation mode gives a series of driving tests to complete before you can enter a Grand Prix.

SAME OLD SAME OLD

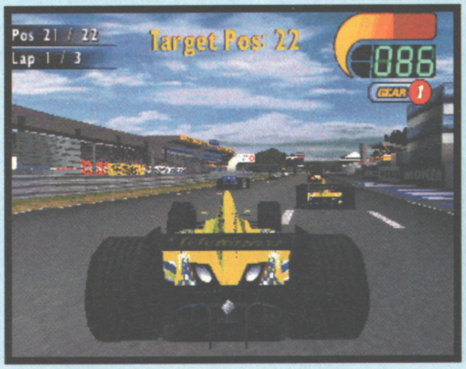
To say *F1WGP* looks a little rough around the edges would be an understatement. Graphics are extremely ropey, and none of the viewpoints available really satisfy.

To be fair, it runs reasonably swiftly, with minimal pop-up and holds itself together surprisingly well in split-screen mode, but it has all been done much better elsewhere.

WORTH PLAYING?

Arcade mode won't hold your attention for long, but Simulation mode is interesting for a while as you learn subtleties in the driving system, such as exploiting other cars' slipstreams.

Unfortunately, unless you're really fanatical about F1, it can be a long-winded affair – both in real-life and in videogames – and only the very best games are able to transcend this fact. *F1WGP* just ain't fun, plain and simple, and adding a barrage of tweakable options simply can't mask that. You'd be well advised to search elsewhere for your high-octane thrills.



"Let's put the pedal to the metal!" Cheesy voice-over action ahoy

computer and video games

★★

IF YOU LIKE THIS...
F1 Racing Championship (N64),
Metropolis Street Racer (DC)

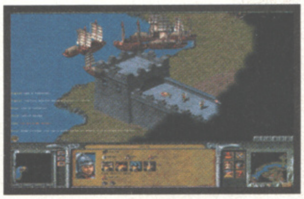
PC CD ROM

COST: **£29.99**

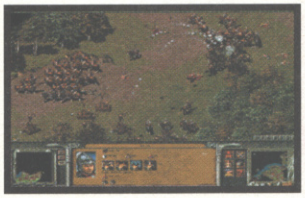
OUT: **NOW**

MULTIPLAYER: **1-8**

Losing a polo game cost you more than a round of drinks in ancient China. *FOTD* ain't gore-packed but has it's moments – soldiers explode when hit by catapult rocks



Avoid wall assaults with sea-born invasions

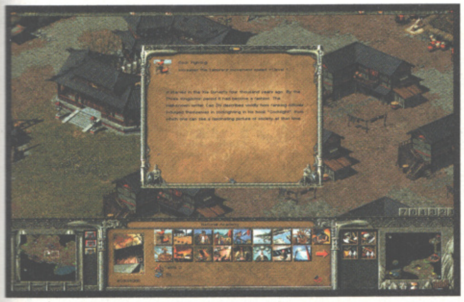


Massed catapults can be a tad *too* deadly

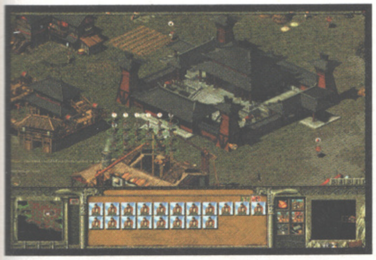
THREE KINGDOMS: FATE OF THE DRAGON

Is this oriental RTS a crouching tiger or a hidden dragon?

WORDS & SCREENSHOTS: PETER WALKER



Research Cock Fighting and units move faster? Hey, it's educational



Labourers build towns and can be trained as soldiers

Cut-scenes ain't bad considering the minimum PC spec

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Chinese-made *Age of Empires*-alike based on a 'historical' saga of three warlords who scrapped it out in 2nd Century China. You play as any of the three and through the usual resource management, army creation and battlefield brilliance, try to make your kingdom rule.

AAH, MONKEY!

Those with RTS experience, will know the score at once: build a base, harvest resources, research new technology and build more advanced structures, all the while beating off enemy attacks. It takes a couple of missions to get to grips with what effects what before you can concentrate on the advanced stuff like morale and diplomacy.

COSMETIC SURGERY

There are some tidy gameplay nips and tucks, most notably your top soldiers' ability to gain new special skills and spells as they level up. This means you think twice before mounting Kamikaze attacks on the enemy stronghold.

Having to keep troops in tip-top shape by housing them in siege camps, which must be constantly stocked by food and booze, adds a logistical – though laborious – layer to the tactical scrapping.

HELLO AGAIN

But, overall, the gameplay offers little that hasn't been done before. Several missions in and it all becomes very samey. The bases look repetitive, and once your defences are up you can leave the game running for an hour and find little changed on your return.

Tried-and-tested RTS techniques like the mindless 'tank rush' work, making for simplified strategies. And some of the research effects are bizarre – discover Cock Fighting and your troops move faster?! Eh?

WORTH PLAYING?

Worth a look if you're into RTS and fancy a change of historical scene and a slightly different game system. Or if your PC is low spec – they've managed to cram all of this onto a recommended spec of P166Mhz. We're impressed.

computer and video Games

★★★

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY THESE...
Ages of Empires 2 (PC), *Shogun: Total War* (PC), *Civilisation 2* (PC)

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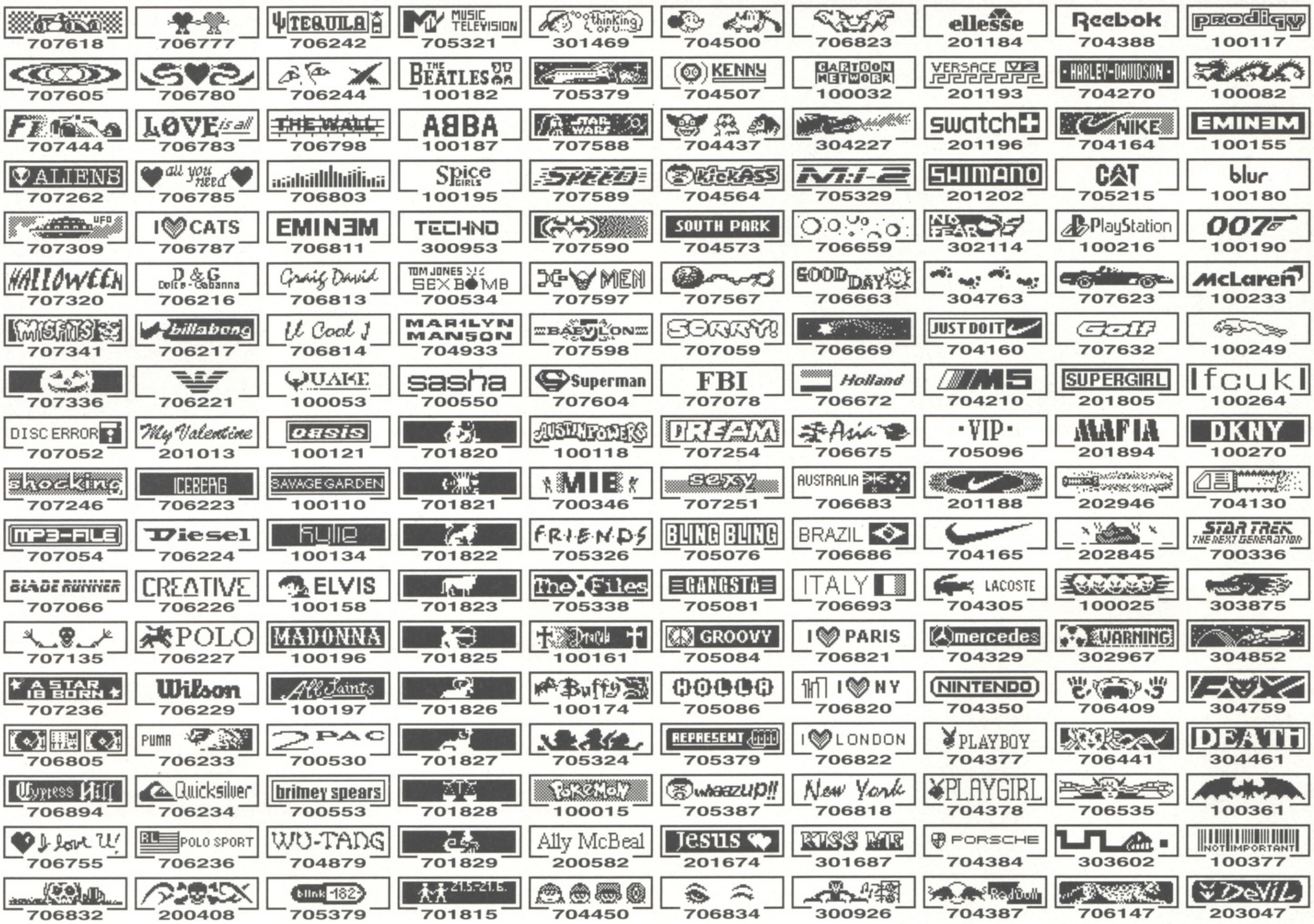

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TLC – WATERFALLS	407477	STEPS – DEEPER SHADE OF BLUE	407456	CELINE DION – THAT'S THE WAY	407254
TOM JONES – IT'S NOT UNUSUAL	407479	VERVE – BITTER SWEET SYMPHONY	407541	THE CORRS – RUNAWAY	407265
AALIYAH – TRY AGAIN	407200	TLC – UNPRETTY	407475	DESTINY'S CHILD – SAY MY NAME	407280
WILL SMITH – WILL 2K	407504	TOM JONES — SEXBOMB	407480	JENNIFER LOPEZ – CRAZY	407612
ALL SAINTS – BLACK COFFEE	913001	ITCHY & SCRATCHY THEME	407686	SMASHMOUTH – ALLSTAR	407447
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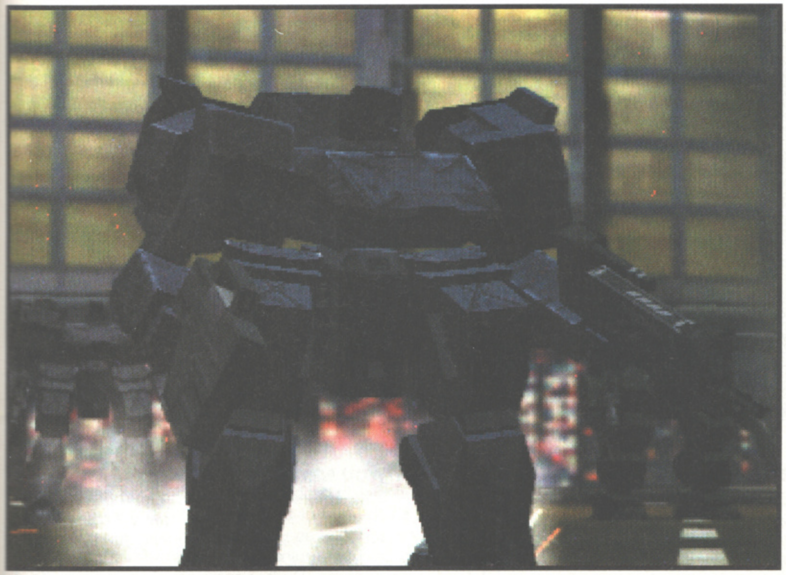
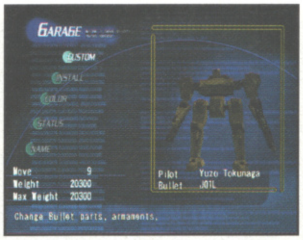


It works like this: each robot has a movement limit. You plan its moves on the grid, plus which enemy it's going to attack – if it's in range. Once you've done that, you watch these cool animations of your orders being carried out



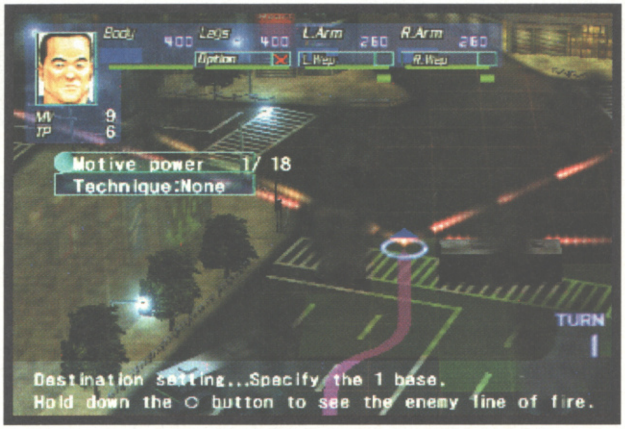
Move 9
Weight 20300
Max Weight 20300
Pilot Yuzo Tokunaga
Bullet J01L
Change Bullet parts, armaments.

Time spent in the garage improving your Mechs' performance pays off in battle

PS2

COST: **£29.99**
OUT: **NOW**

MULTIPLAYER: **1-2**



Motive power 1/ 18
Technique:None

Destination setting...Specify the 1 base.
Hold down the ○ button to see the enemy line of fire.

If at first the game seems like some kind of physics exam, give it time as it soon becomes easy enough to use. Once you get good at it, the carnage is more than satisfying

ROBOT WARLORDS

More meaty mech mayhem for your PS2

WORDS & SCREENSHOTS: LEE SKITTRELL

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Mech madness is everywhere these days: *ZOE, Ring of Red, Armoured Core 2, Mechwarrior 4* – even the BBC is in on the act with the cheerful cheese of Robot Wars.

And just when you thought the robot rampage was over, *Robot Warlords* enters the arena, only this one's a turn-based affair. So who said European gamers don't like Mech-based games?

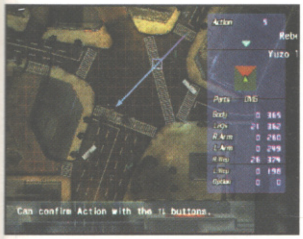
LIKE CHESS, BUT BETTER

The action plays out like a fun game of chess, but with massive battle robots instead of poncey ivory figures. It's fairly hardcore, and initially you may find yourself squinting at the screen in a daze as you struggle with stats and game rules. But stick with it and before long everything falls into place.

STRATEGY STREET

At the start of every mission you're given criteria for winning, such as destroying your opponent within a certain number of moves, and then you take it in turns with your rival to dish out the carnage.

Each battle arena is split into a grid, and your 'bot can move a certain amount of squares per turn. Then you must select which opponent to attack and with which type of weapon. Strategic thinkers will love it, but more action-oriented minds will flounder.



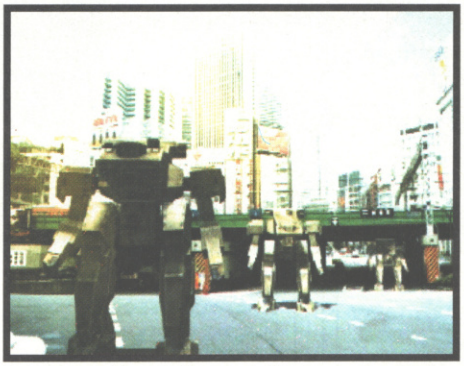
Can confirm Action with the ↑↓ buttons.

Plan your moves from different angles

WORTH PLAYING?

There's lots right with *Robot Warlords*, but also a few things wrong. Firstly, the graphics don't exactly scream PS2, some of the text translations are woeful, and the game menus aren't what you would call user-friendly.

The good news is that once you invest some time in it, *Robot Warlords'* true qualities, like its depth and the sheer satisfaction of winning, shine through. If you're a lazy gamer, don't bother, but players willing to spend time tweaking their robots' stats and learning every nuance of combat will love it to bits. A hardcore stats-head's dream.



No, these warbots aren't off on a spot of Sunday morning shopping. Civil war has engulfed Japan and the city streets are the battlefield

After you've planned your moves, you sit back and watch the robots duke it out

It can take a while to work out what your next move should be. It pays to think about it

COMPETITION

Five copies of *Robot Warlords* are up for grabs. Answer the question and send to: 'I want to be a Robot Warlord!', C&VG Magazine, 30 Cleveland Street, London, W1P 5FF

What was the name of Dr Who's famous robot dog buddy?

A/Katie
B/K-9
C/Krusty

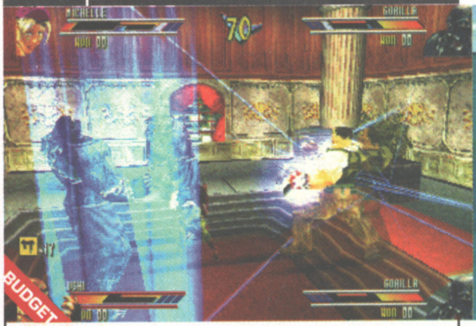
computer and video Games

★★★

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY THESE...
Mechwarrior 4 (PC),
Front Mission 3 (PSone)

PlayStation

GEKIDO



£9.99 **OUT NOW**

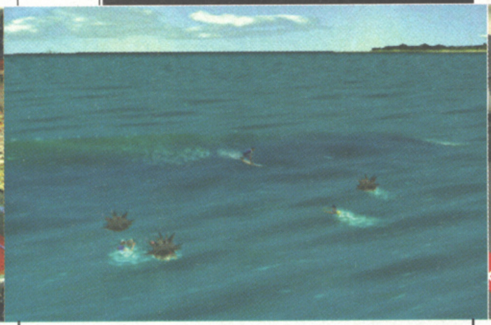
WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW
A rollicking retro rumble in the mold of *Double Dragon*, only with better graphics and no twist ending. The fighting may lack the precision of *Tekken*, but hits still look suitably painful and it's satisfying to play. Good results in the one-player game unlock a whole bag of treats for you. And surely no-one will be able to resist the chance of a four-player romp through this.

WORTH PLAYING?
The multiplayer mode is the main selling point, although the single player experience is useful for learning new combos and serves to satisfy any late night smack 'em up lust you may develop. Worth a look now that it's cheap.

★★★

Dreamcast

CHAMPIONSHIP SURFER



£29.99 **OUT NOW**

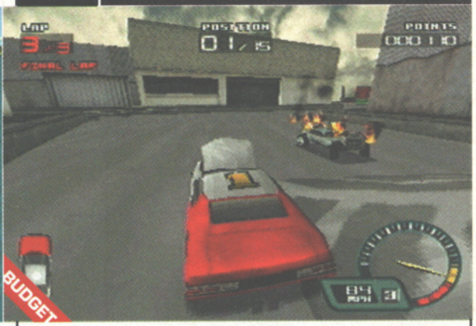
WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW
After the appalling mess that was *H3O* on PS2, you'd think someone would have taken note. Well, these guys have managed to stick in a half-decent control system, but at the cost of any sort of gameplay whatsoever. How long do you think 'stand up, go left, go right, maybe pull a trick if you're lucky' gameplay is going to last? Less than an hour, even in the worth-having-one-go four-player mode.

WORTH PLAYING?
Surfing is a very small niche market, but that's still no excuse for putting out something this bad, safe in the knowledge that surfers will have to buy it if they want action on their DC. Lacks compelling gameplay and any kind of replay value whatsoever.

★

PlayStation

DEMOLITION RACER



£9.99 **OUT NOW**

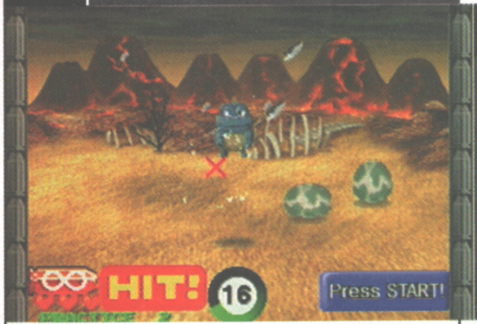
WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW
Nothing subtle about the racing action here. Just get to the end of the course while causing as much carnage as you can. Winning isn't even the main priority – points for punishment, that's the key to success. Badly ageing graphics fail to hide the lack of any depth or long-term appeal. But for this price, a few hours of utter chaos and bad boy driving is almost worth it.

WORTH PLAYING?
It's badly dated now and the simplistic action leaves you with an empty feeling inside as you pine for something slightly deeper and more involving. A real case of 'Wham! Bam! Thank you, ma'am', but we want more gameplay.

★★

PlayStation

POINT BLANK 3



£29.99 **OUT NOW**

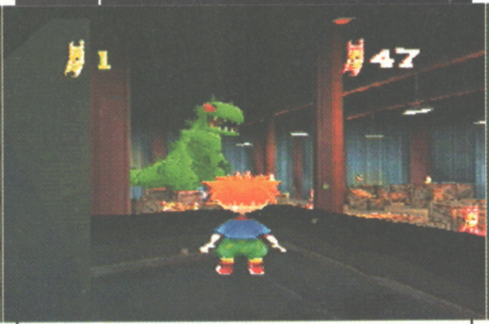
WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW
America isn't the only country with a gun problem. But while theirs is trying to stop fruitcakes shooting up high schools, ours is not having enough decent gun games on our consoles. The *Point Blank* series has traditionally been a safe bet for some plastic pistol larks by encouraging you to blast away like a lunatic, but after two instalments they're seriously starting to run out of steam.

WORTH PLAYING?
The selection of different games and modes makes this fun, but only if you're new to the series – if you've played either of the previous two, then you know what you're in store for here. Fun for parties and newbies, otherwise best avoided.

★★

PlayStation

RUGRATS IN PARIS



£24.99 **OUT NOW**

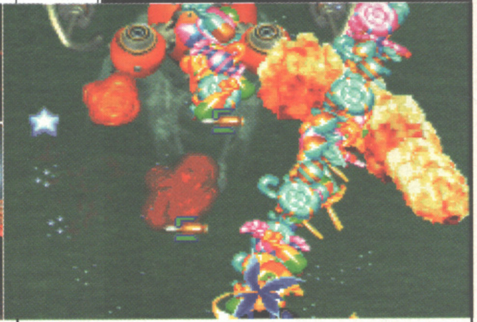
WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW
Be afraid. Be very afraid. The Rugrats are back. If all the kids in your neighbourhood haven't turned to the likes of Eminem or Marilyn Manson for their role models, the chances are they are into these freaks. And to be honest, those other guys are probably better mentors. They wouldn't bore you by explaining how to catch a train on your own while wandering around a theme park – that's what the Rugrats do.

WORTH PLAYING?
Wandering around dull 3D levels, playing the odd sub-game to pick up tickets to exchange for items to use later on is the capital of Dullsville, the least trendy place for a gamer to be. Strictly for those with an IQ lower than their shoe size.

★

Dreamcast

GUNBIRD 2



£19.99 **OUT NOW**

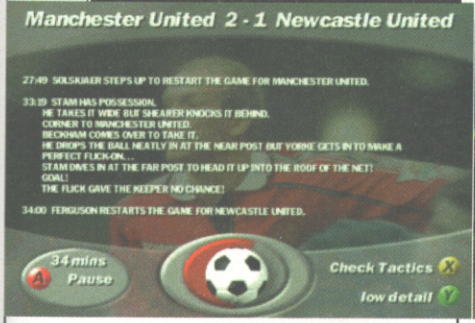
WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW
How many mad-as-a-kipper shoot 'em ups do you know where your smart bombs turn enemy bullets into sweets? Or any where a rabbit pops up every now and then to explain the plot as it goes along. Sounds like what would have happened to Alice in Wonderland if Capcom had written it and not Lewis Carrol. You know the drill – vertically scrolling arcade blasting, all hell breaks loose, screen full of bullets.

WORTH PLAYING?
Great fun, especially in two-player mode. It's a full-on retro blast with a healthy dose of Japanese weirdness. Very linear and predictable but you just don't care 'cos it's so off its face. If there was dope testing in games, this would be first in line.

★★★

GIANT KILLERS

Dreamcast


Manchester United 2 - 1 Newcastle United

27:49 SOLSKJAER STEPS UP TO RESTART THE GAME FOR MANCHESTER UNITED.

33:19 STAM HAS POSSESSION.
HE TAKES IT WIDE BUT SHEARER KNOCKS IT BEHIND.
CORNER TO MANCHESTER UNITED.
BECKHAM COMES OVER TO TAKE IT.
HE DROPS THE BALL NEATLY IN AT THE NEAR POST BUT YORKE GETS IN TO MAKE A PERFECT FLICK-ON...
STAM DIVES IN AT THE FAR POST TO HEAD IT UP INTO THE ROOF OF THE NET!
GOAL!
THE FLICK GAVE THE KEEPER NO CHANCE!

34:00 FERGUSON RESTARTS THE GAME FOR NEWCASTLE UNITED.

£29.99 **OUT NOW**

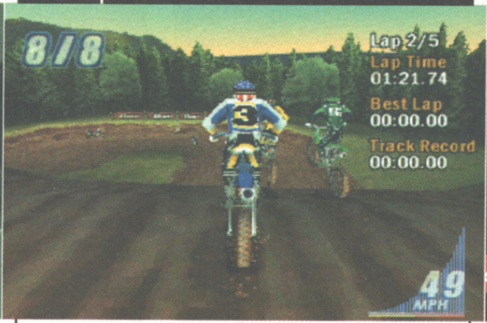
WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW
Now that managers of football teams are becoming as famous as their players, footy manager sims aren't regarded as the geek-fests they once were. This latest effort is geared at newbies to the Ferguson/Wenger wannabe scene, making it less of a number crunching stat fest and more of a basic 'name your squad and play' type of affair.

WORTH PLAYING?
The approach is simple and the execution is simpler. Screen after screen of flat text with match descriptions that border on a Songs of Praise level of boredom. Giant Killer? Pah, couldn't harm a flea, let alone a giant.

★★

SUPERCROSS

PlayStation



£29.99 **OUT NOW**

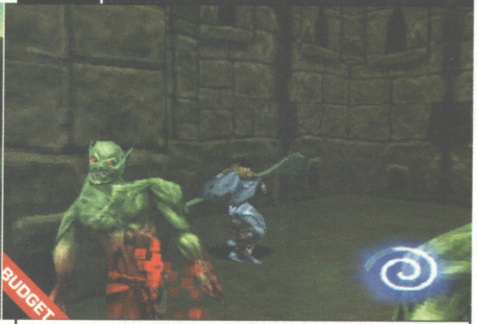
WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW
EA seems to think it can stick its Sports logo on anything and it will become popular. Maybe they can claim the most popular football and cricket games but we have to draw the line at *Supercross*. There might not be much competition in the dirt bike game market, but even if you're desperate for some two-wheeled off-road action this is hardly worth touching.

WORTH PLAYING?
This suffers from horrible controls, a total lack of excitement and no feeling whatsoever that you're participating in one of the most dangerous two-wheel sports around. The potential of the sport has been wasted by a very run-of-the-mill, seen-it-before type of game that even petrol heads will hate.

★

SOUL REAVER: LEGACY OF KAIN

PlayStation



£9.99 **OUT NOW**

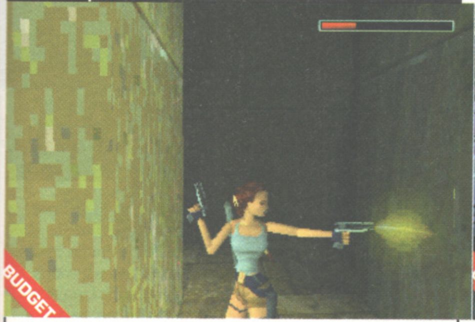
WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW
Better looking and more playable than the early *Tomb Raider* games this resembles, with some genuinely tense moments and plenty of gory stake-through-the-heart style action. The combination of tough puzzle solving and blood-drenched combat proved irresistible when it was first released, and now it's out for only a tenner it will put a lot of recently released PlayStation games to shame.

WORTH PLAYING?
Superbly polished and that rare breed of game that hasn't aged too badly. Spilling over with atmosphere and full of nice touches, this is certainly one for those who have become disillusioned with Lara's antics of late.

★★★★★

TOMB RAIDER 2

PlayStation



£9.99 **OUT NOW**

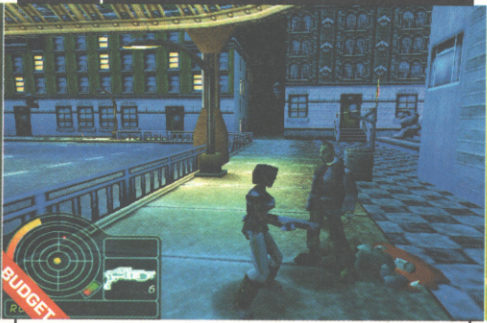
WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW
Before the seemingly endless sequels disease set in at Core, everyone thought this second in the series was pretty cool. Now it's widely acknowledged to be the weakest link in *Tomb Raider*'s history. It left the ancient ruins of Egypt and Tibet for modern day Venice and put more of the emphasis on action and gunfighting instead of puzzle-solving. Fun at the time, not now.

WORTH PLAYING?
If you simply can't get enough *Tomb Raider* action, of course you'll love this. If you've never played a *TR* game before, get the first one. If you've played a couple and are already a little tired of them, this'll bore your pants off.

★★

URBAN CHAOS

PlayStation



£9.99 **OUT NOW**

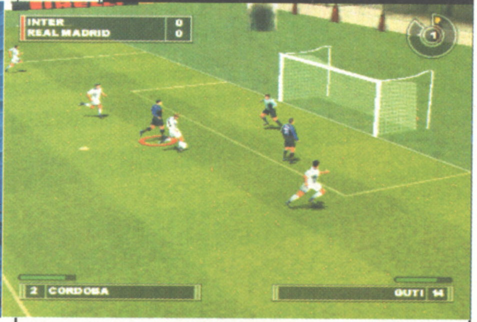
WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW
A pretty good 3D action-adventure with you playing as a girlie cop in a big, bad world. Plenty of action and gung-ho gameplay with some original features, though the clumsy control system was never up to much and the visuals are starting to look decidedly rough around the edges. Can't touch the likes of *Syphon Filter* and *Metal Gear*, but this heavily mission-based blaster still holds some appeal.

WORTH PLAYING?
There's plenty of challenge in here with the later missions throwing up huge levels to explore, loads of sub-quests to complete as well as horrendous fire fights to take part in. It's showing its age but you could do worse for a tenner.

★★★

EUROPEAN SUPER LEAGUE

Dreamcast



£29.99 **OUT NOW**

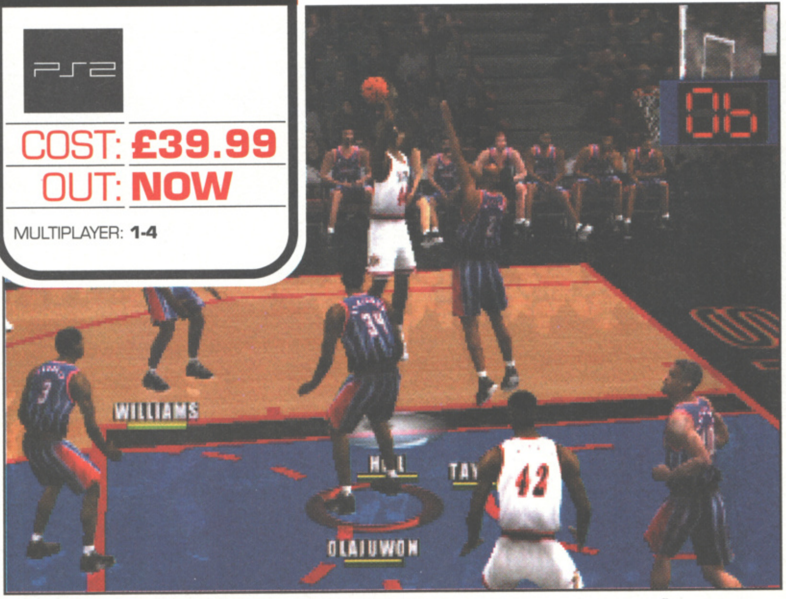
WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW
Based on the Champions League but doesn't use the official licence to save money. Money that could have been used on the game itself, but blatantly wasn't if this final result is anything to go by. It's got nothing on a *FIFA* or an *ISS* game, with over-simplified controls, even in Simulation mode, and leads to unrealistic matches. And where are Man Utd? Europe without them? Unthinkable.

WORTH PLAYING?
Even though it doesn't have a lot of competition on the DC, you have to seriously think about whether it's worth shelling out for a sub-standard footy game that'll leave you feeling distinctly non-league against the PlayStation's Premiership efforts.

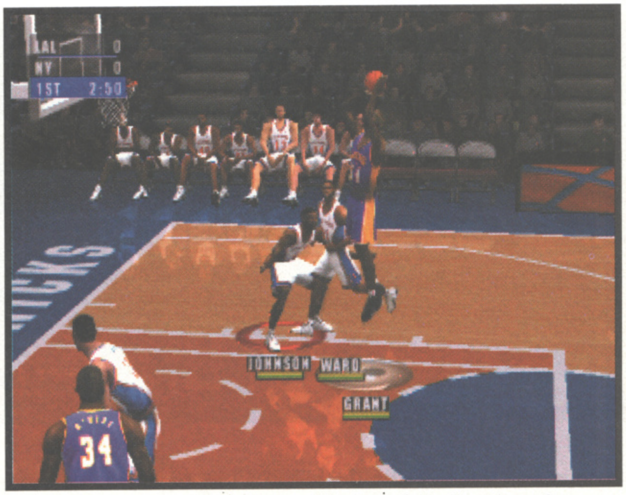
★★

PS2

COST: £39.99
OUT: NOW
MULTIPLAYER: **1-4**



If you can't manage to dribble your way through the defence, loop one over the top and cross your fingers



Defending your basket is a pain. If only you could rugby tackle him. Damn those rules

NBA LIVE 2001

A pretty solid b-baller, but nothing much to set your court alight

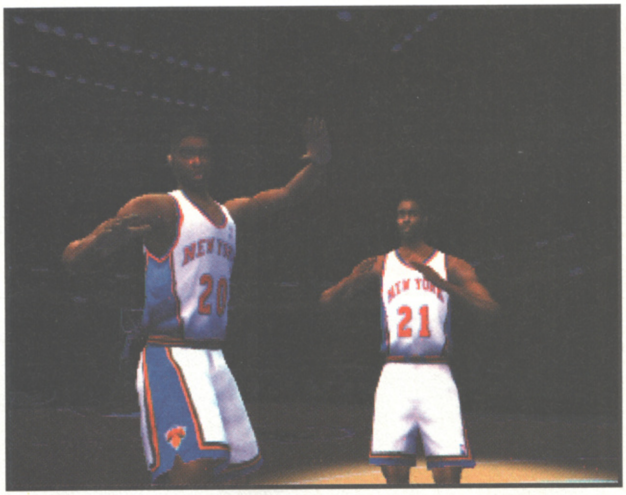
WORDS & SCREENSHOTS: JOHNNY MINKLEY

As when the elegant caribou skips effortlessly across the vast plain, so the basketball star stumbles awkwardly toward the hoop

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

EA, masters of the update, return with the latest in the long line of the popular *NBA Live* basketball series. What's new is that this is the first *Live* title to hit PS2.

In keeping with the EA Sports tradition, *NBA Live 2001* features bang-up-to-date US teams and players, as well as classic teams from the past, allowing you to pit the masters of yore against the cream of the 21st century crop. As you'd expect, there's a veritable cornucopia of options for you to fiddle with, from myriad modes of play, to a wealth of changeable in-game rules.



"Yo man, hi-five! That was totally awesome dude – you is fly." Or something like that

LOOKS CAN BE DECEPTIVE

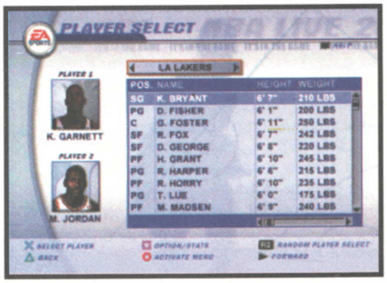
As a first attempt on the PS2, *Live 2001* generally looks pretty sound, with solid, well-animated players that move around the court convincingly, and neat effects like impressively shiny reflections on the court. Players' faces have been reasonably well recreated – some more successfully than others – but in the main they look the part.

The main game and One-on-One mode certainly play well, though somewhat inexplicably the three-point shootout option from the PSone version is absent. As impressive a package as it may appear however, there are some 'fun' issues that need addressing.

WORTH PLAYING?

This is partly due to the nature of the sport itself. Attacking may leave you panting in exhilaration, and nailing a three-pointer when the clock's running is an evergreen buzz, but as an essentially non-contact sport, defending is made a chore 'cos you can't crop your opponents like in football. And Turning off the fouls merely results in a ludicrous free-for-all.

NBA Jam and *Arch Rivals* got around this with off-the-wall gameplay, but when a game takes itself this seriously, there's more chance of laughing at Schindler's List. If you're a stat-obsessed basketball geek, this shouldn't trouble you, as it's probably the best 'serious' version of the three b-ball titles now available on PS2. The casual sports-gamer requires something a little more heart-pumping than this, though.



PLAYER SELECT

PLAYER 1
K. GARNETT
PLAYER 2
M. JORDAN

LA LAKERS

POS.	NAME	HEIGHT	WEIGHT
SG	K. BRYANT	6' 7"	210 LBS
PG	D. FISHER	6' 1"	200 LBS
C	G. FOSTER	6' 11"	250 LBS
SF	R. FOX	6' 7"	242 LBS
SF	D. GEORGE	6' 8"	220 LBS
PF	H. GRANT	6' 10"	245 LBS
PG	R. HARPER	6' 6"	215 LBS
PF	R. HORRY	6' 10"	235 LBS
PG	T. LUE	6' 0"	175 LBS
PF	M. MADSEN	6' 9"	240 LBS

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LAL 0
NY 0
1ST 3:00
WARD
HARPER
HOUSTON
BRYANT
GRANT
JOHNSON

We love the awesome squeaky-trainer effect. It rocks

computer and video
Games
★★★

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY THESE...
Madden NFL 2001 (PS2), *NBA 2001* (PSone), *NBA 2K* (DC)

NBA HOOPZ

Basketball: dat iz hip, phat, street and fly, innit?

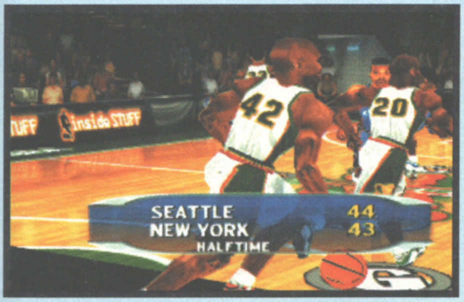
WORDS & SCREENSHOTS: JOHNNY MINKLEY

PS2

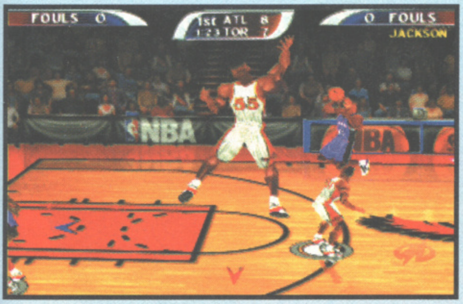
COST: £39.99

OUT: MAR 30

MULTIPLAYER: **1-6**



Players are solid enough, but up close they look a little ragged



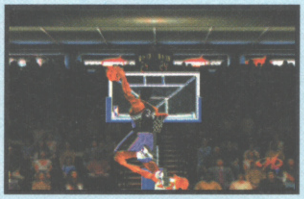
Hoopz doesn't take itself too seriously, and this allows for some comically exaggerated movements and impossibly high leaps

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

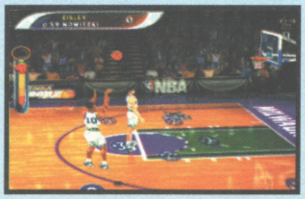
OK, we've had the serious simulation already in *NBA Live 2001*, so now it's time to loosen up a little. *NBA Hoopz* comes from the same stable as the slam-dunkin' classic of yore, *NBA Jam*, and builds on that game, adding a couple of extra players to offer up to six player simultaneous action. Alongside the main section, there are loads of mini-games to keep you entertained, plus the option to create your own unbeatable side from the NBA's finest.

THAT'S A FUNNY IMPRESSION

Hoopz certainly doesn't push the PS2 hard in the graphics department, and though it runs smoothly enough, players look a little ragged up-close.



Slam dunk a beauty and enjoy the replay



Race against the clock to rack up points

The game contains real teams and players from the NBA, offering adequate representations of their real-life counterparts, but it could have been better.

The game is fun at first in a very retro kind of way, and anyone who's played the *NBA Jam* series will relish the relaxed rules and fluid play, but it soon becomes apparent that the game is rather limited.

WORTH PLAYING?

The mini-games such as the three point shoot-out are good for a laugh and provide a welcome break from the action, offering more challenges to get your teeth into. Having six players going at it all at once is also a hoot too, and makes for some frenetic, competitive play in short bursts, but that's the point really.

It's a little too simplistic to offer serious long-term play for basketball fanatics, but if you want some lighthearted, dip-in-dip-out action, get a load of mates round and shoot some *Hoopz*.

computer and video Games

★★★

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY THESE...
NBA Live 2001 (PS2), *NBA 2K* (DC), *Total NBA* (PSone)

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RED DEVILS	Ja Ja Jaaah	GUNNERS	007	
3501	1460	3514	1550	0662

OUR TOP 5 RING TONES...

1500 Holler - Spice Girl
1501 Music - Madonna
1502 Hey Jude - Beatles
1503 Especially for you - Kylie
1583 Bat out of hell - Meatloaf

FOOTBALL TEAMS...

DERBY	EVERTON	BURNLEY F.C.	LIVERPOOL	Wolves
1463	1464	3933	1466	1489
Millwall F.C.	Newcastle Utd.	WEST HAM	ASTON VILLA	FULHAM F.C.
1546	1468	1472	1650	1480
BRADFORD	Charlton	COVENTRY	IPSWICH TOWN	Arsenal
1651	1652	1653	1654	1461
LEICESTER CITY	HEARTS	MIDDLESBORO	SOUTHAMPTON	FOREST
1655	1481	1658	1659	3937
SUNDERLAND	TOTTENHAM HOTSPUR	ROVERS	CHELSEA	SCOTLAND
1660	1661	1469	1462	1485

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CHOOSE FROM A SELECTION OF GREAT RING TONES...

0395	Thong Song - Sisco
1513	Stan - Eminem
1512	Zombienation - Kermkraft 400
0374	Sex Bomb - Tom Jones
1515	The Real Slim Shandy - Eminem
0268	Angels - R Williams
0283	Blue - Eiffel 65
1501	Music - Madonna
1502	Hey Jude - Beatle
1503	Especially For You - Kylie
1500	Holler - Spice Girls
1504	The Power Of Love - Jennifer Rush
1505	Sex Machine - James Brown
1507	Dancing Queen - Abba
1508	I Turn To You - Mel C
1514	Vindaloo- Fat Les
1516	Charlies Angels
1517	Sky - Sonique
1518	I Belive I Can Fly - R Kelly
1519	Kids - R Williams & Kylie
1520	Park Life - Blur
1575	The Lonely One - Alice DJ
1576	Who Let The Dogs Out - Baha Men
1577	Feel The Beat - Darude
1578	Silence - Delerium
1579	The Way I Am - Eminem
1580	Afraid Of Strangers - Iron Maiden
1581	The Model - Kraftwerk
1582	Monday Monday - Mamas And Papas
1583	Bat Out Of Hell - Meatloaf
1584	Missing You - Puff Daddy
1585	Rock DJ- R Williams
1586	Stomp - Steps
1587	No Scrubs - Tlc
1588	Heart Of Asia - Watergate
1589	If I Let You Go - West Life
1590	My Love - West Life
0382	Sweet Like Chocolate - Shanks And Bigfoot
0151	Star Wars - Theme
0402	What A Girl Want - Christina Aguilera
0299	Don't Call Me Baby - Madison Avenue
0296	Crazy - Britney Spears
0284	Boom Boom Boom - Vengaboys
0282	Bittersweet Symphony - The Verve
0309	Fall Apart - Sugar Ray
0322	If You Had My Love - Jennifer Lopez
0335	King Of My Castle - Wamdue Project
0340	Livin La Vida Loca - Ricky Martin
0357	Oops I Did It Again - Britney Spears
0377	She's The One - Robbie Williams
0257	Two Time - Ann Lee
0258	American Woman- Lenny Kravitz
0260	Absolutely Everybody - Vanessa Amorosi
0265	All Star - Smash Mouth
0267	American Pie - Madonna
0272	Around The World - Red Hot Chilli Peppers
0273	As Long As You Love Me - Backstreet Boys
0275	Back At One - Brian Mcknight
0277	Backstreet's Back - Backstreet Boys
0279	Ballamos - Enrique Iglesias
0280	Believe - Cher

MORE GREAT GRAPHICS...

MyGirl	HOT	britney spears		
1367	0730	1685	1712	1662
five		westlife		
1548	1479	1549	1665	1666
SPEED	AMERICAN PIE			MOTD
0707	0699	0438	1478	1731
Emmerdale	Neighbours	Ferrari	EastEnders	Spice GIRLS
1556	1563	0502	1554	1547
	TITANIC	SUPER BABE		I ♥ BECKHAM
0812	0710	1566	0595	1832
BECKHAM is god		- my boy -	MATRIX	The BLUES BROTHERS
1833	0452	1326	0670	0677
X-MEN	STAR TREK	MIB	STAR WARS	THE MARK OF ZORRO Z
1717	0684	0686	0687	0688
	PARTY		METALLICA	
0828	1364	0701	0845	1475
	STEPS			I love U!
0659	1669	0586	0587	0832
Buffy	MERCEDES BENZ	SCLUB7	Wassup	EMINEM
1552	0500	1564	1567	1555

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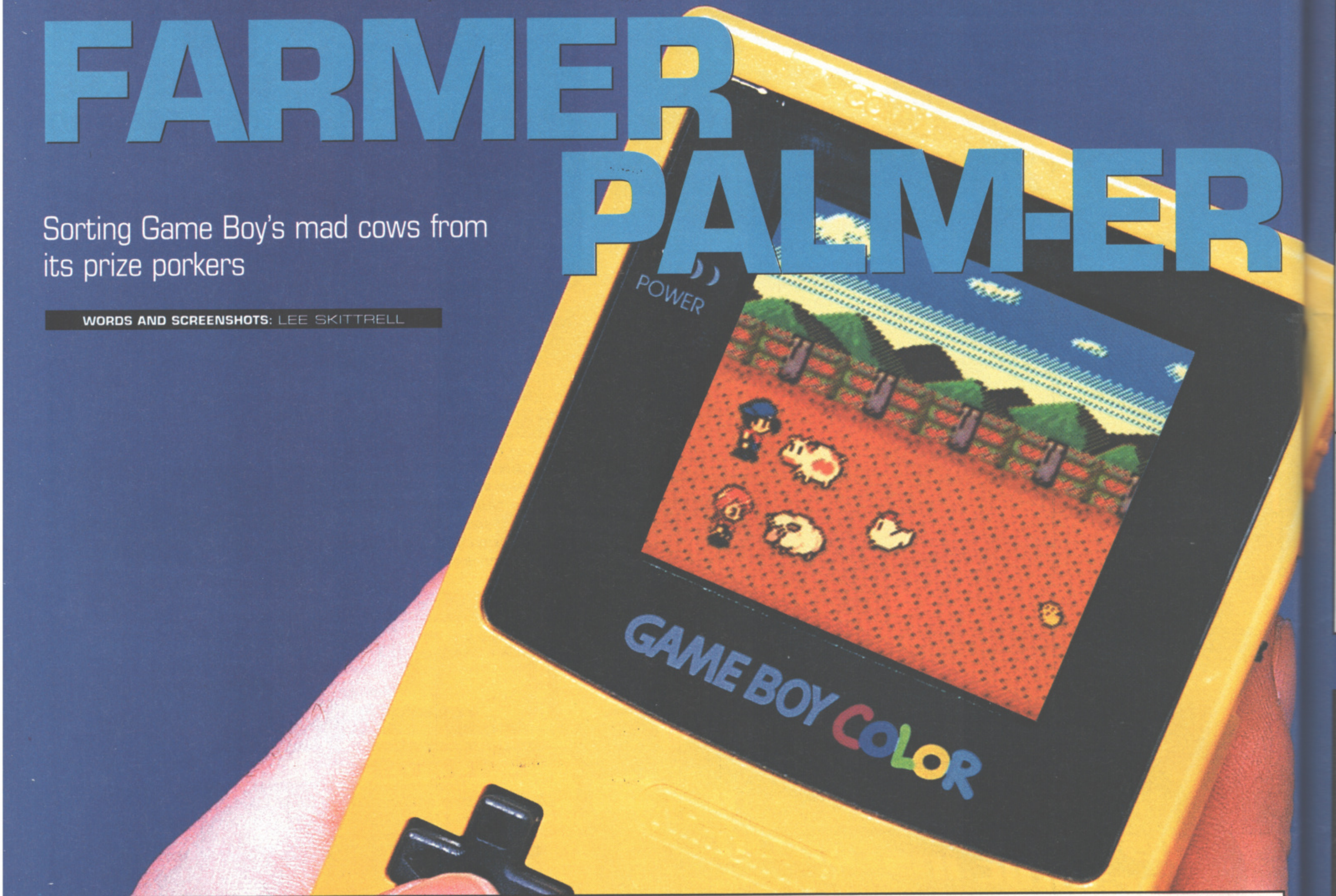
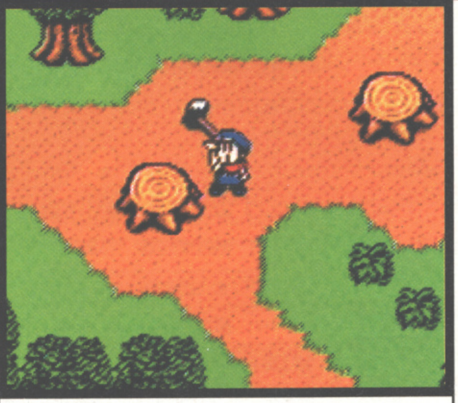
FARMER PALM-ER

Sorting Game Boy's mad cows from its prize porkers

WORDS AND SCREENSHOTS: LEE SKITTRELL





GAME BOY COLOR

COST: **£24.99**

OUT: **NOW**

MULTIPLAYER: **NO**

HARVEST MOON 2

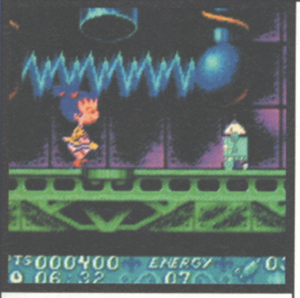
WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW
Farm your way to victory! When the Mayor decides to sell off the local farm to make room for a theme park, it's up to you to step in and save the day. You are given three glorious years to make money from your agricultural efforts. If you do well, the land is saved and the villagers are happy. Do poorly and the men with the bulldozers will soon come a-knocking. *Harvest Moon 2* is one of the coolest GB games we've played in ages and we want you to love it as much as us.

BIG IN JAPAN
The *Harvest Moon* games have been massive sellers in Japan, and it's easy to see why. The intricate process of growing crops, caring for and breeding livestock, managing your income and keeping on good terms with the locals gradually sucks you into the game world in a way rivalled only by the mighty *Pokémon*. You'll want to check in on your farm all the time.

BUSY! BUSY! BUSY!
There are three main areas in the game: your farm, the village and the mountains, and there's plenty to do in every area. Special events are held in the village and you can also do your shopping there. Fruit and other stuff can be found in the mountains. Your farm itself is sprawling and the deeper you progress through the game, the more you can expand and upgrade it, allowing for more crop storage and more animals to care for. There is a lot to think about in *HM2*, and you'll need to be highly organised to get through the three tough years ahead.

WORTH PLAYING?
The in-depth nature of play and the organisational skills required to do well in *HM2*, along with the peaceful themes of caring and prospering, won't appeal to every player. It will also take a while for you to adapt to a very different playing style than you may be used to on GB and the complete lack of combat will trouble many. But despite initial bewilderment, *Harvest Moon 2* blossoms into a beautiful GB experience, and one that's quietly addictive. It may not sound cool on paper, but get it and get a warm feeling inside.

computer and video games
★★★★



COST: **£24.99**
OUT: **NOW**
MULTIPLAYER: **NO**

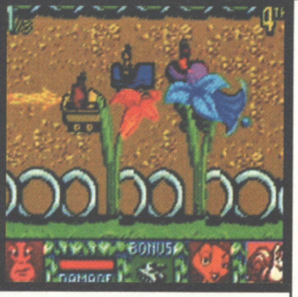
RUGRATS IN PARIS

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW
If you've ever been stuck looking after younger relatives and have been desperate for something to make them stop their whining, this could be the answer to your prayers. And what's more, after you've tucked the little bleeders into bed, you might even enjoy a quick play yourself.

DO THE EURO
Tommy and co have to work their way around the gigantic Parisian theme park EuroReptarland. The adventure is made up of a variety of simple mini-games and you have to play the games at the sideshows to win tickets for the rides. These big attractions take the form of simple challenges like leaping around a platform-filled rocket ship touring famous world landmarks in a cute li'l plane.

WORTH PLAYING?
We hardly need to tell you that Rugrats is aimed at younger players, but the time limits and difficulty setting will stump most players early on. The theme park setting is cool and the mini-games are fun, but it's too twee for older players and too tough for youngsters. A bit of a shame.

computer and video Games
★★



COST: **£24.99**
OUT: **NOW**
MULTIPLAYER: **NO**

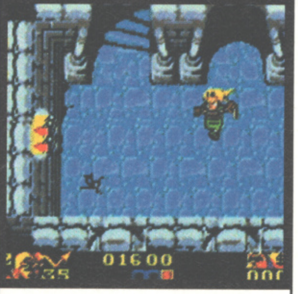
ANTZ RACING

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW
Just as we were all in danger of forgetting about the awesome Antz movie, EA pumps out this licensed cartoon racer. Join Z, Bala, Weaver and all the other characters whose names you'd forgotten in a full-pelt race over miniature courses that change with the seasons.

ANTZ = PANTZ?
Though it's not packed with features, *Antz Racing* does have charm. The super-crisp, detailed graphics are very nice indeed and the racers all zoom about in their tin can cars at an impressive pace. Power-ups like speed boosts and damage repair are dotted about to help spice things up and the courses get tougher, with more obstacles, as you race through the year's championship.

WORTH PLAYING?
Antz Racing is unoriginal and, with only two play modes, pretty limited. But the racing action is fast and frantic and the game is dead pretty too. It's a shame more treats haven't been packed into the cart because, with a few more features, the game could've been fab. As it stands though, there's simply not enough to justify a full price purchase.

computer and video Games
★★



COST: **£24.99**
OUT: **NOW**
MULTIPLAYER: **NO**

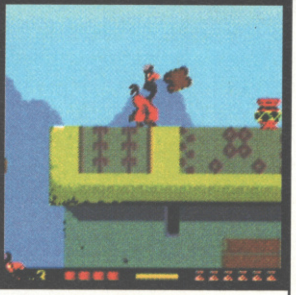
ROBIN

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW
Once upon a time, there was a "wicked" Robin Hood game on the BBC Micro that kept our Johnny happy in between feverish sessions of *Chuckie Egg* and *Football Manager*. Since then, the betighted one hasn't featured all that heavily in videogames. Play this and you'll have an idea why.

HOODWINKED
Robin on GBC is a top-down action game with a few RPG twists. As you trek from dungeon to castle to wooded vale you have to find people to talk to, all the while slaying ghosts and guards alike with your bow and arrows. The best thing about the game is that you can strafe around for increased accuracy, but combat is still fiddly and the difficulty cranked up into the frustration zone.

WORTH PLAYING?
As a character, Robin Hood has lots of cool gaming potential – robbing from rich lords, sniping folk with arrows, even a little slap and tickle with Friar Tuck and Little John. But this GB game will just rob you of £25 and leave you squealing like a stuck pig with its generic, sub-*Zelda* style quest that has only a very limited appeal. If you want action from a man in tights, go for *Zelda*.

computer and video Games
★★



COST: **£24.99**
OUT: **NOW**
MULTIPLAYER: **NO**

THE EMPEROR'S NEW GROOVE

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW
Not a month goes by without at least one Game Boy platform game dropping into our mail bag. And the odds are always in favour of it being a Ubisoft/Disney-licensed one at that. So you can imagine the apathy that seeped through the office as the latest Ubisoft/Disney-licensed platformer was inserted into our trusty handheld.

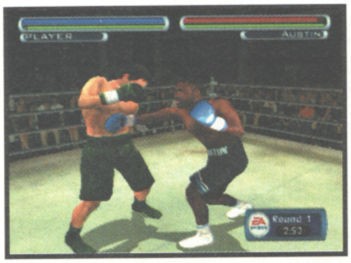
ENOUGH IS ENOUGH
New Groove is as generic as they come. Leap from platform to platform, headbutting and spitting nasty llama phlegm at baddies in a quest to turn yourself back into the regal boy you once were. There is no innovation, there is no pleasure, and considering this is licensed from a big-budget Disney movie, it's ugly as sin.

WORTH PLAYING?
The bottom line is you have played *New Groove* a thousand times before. There are too many average or sub-standard platformers on Game Boy Color, a lot of them licensed from big Disney franchises. The only way to end this torrent of horrible games is to stop buying them, then maybe we will finally get the kind of decent platform action we deserve and crave so badly.

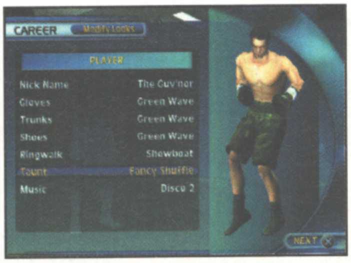
computer and video Games
★

PS2

COST: **£39.99**
OUT: **NOW**
MULTIPLAYER: **1-2**

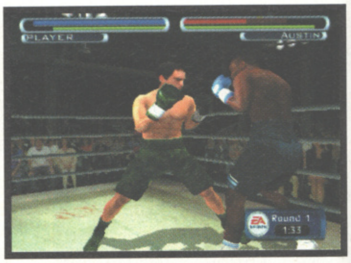


Punches are thrown at a snail's pace



Nick Name The Guv'nor
Gloves Green Wave
Trunks Green Wave
Shoes Green Wave
Ringwalk Showboat
Taunt Fancy Shuffle
Music Disco 2

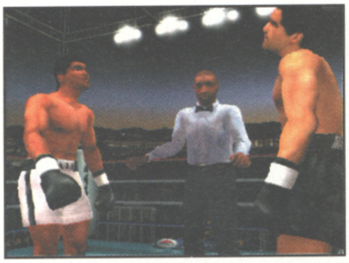
You can create your own fighter to challenge with



It looks great in stills, but moves like a dog

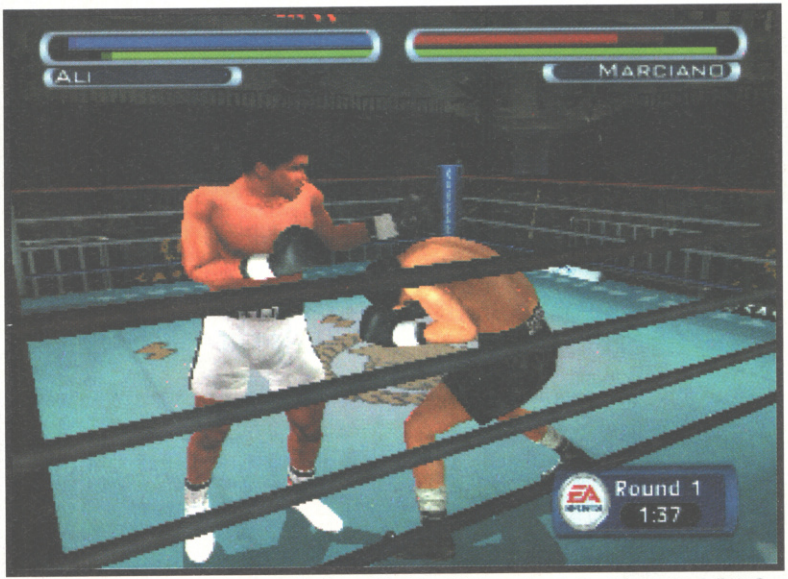
KNOCKOUT KINGS 2001

Legendary fighters,
classic looks,
prehistoric gameplay

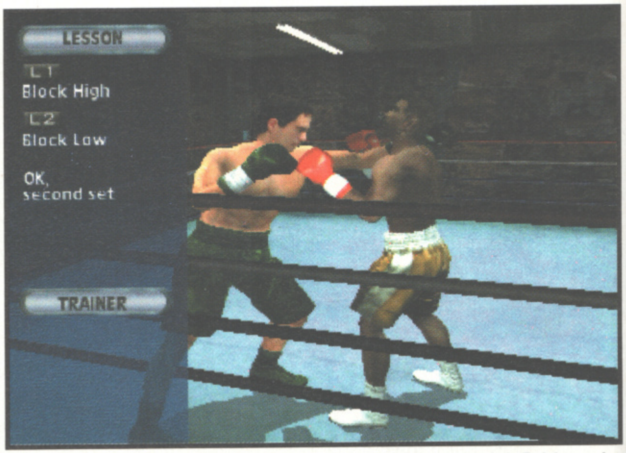


Ali and 'Rocky' Marciano square up for a bout

WORDS & SCREENSHOTS: JOHNNY MINKLEY



You can let rip with dazzling combo moves simply by holding R1 and hitting another button. Where's the challenge?



When you create your own fighter you have to learn the tricks of the trade in Training mode

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Frank Bruno vs Muhammed Ali: surely one of the greatest fights that never was. Two genuine titans of their art, cruelly separated by the boundaries of time, prevented from settling once and for all who is – or was – the greatest.

OK, perhaps not, but our Frank might still scare Ali with one of his panto outfits or his political manifesto. And with *Knockout Kings 2001* you can find out for yourself as you can pit a selection of the greatest fighters history has to offer against one another.

LORDS OF THE RING

You certainly can't fault EA for the detail it puts in its sports titles, and this is no exception. Boxing aficionados will gasp with joy at the selection of true boxing legends available to scrap as.

A good job has been made of recreating the fighters, and the likes of Lewis and Holyfield are all recognisable, enhancing the bruising action on offer, but the compromise for this seems to be the pitifully animated crowd.

There's an excellent range of options and play modes, including the ability to create your own fighter and train him up into a fearsome champion. But all this fails to hide the fact that *KK 2001* is incredibly sluggish, a problem that seems to blight many boxing titles.

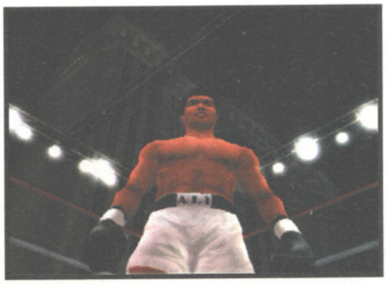
WORTH PLAYING?

Minus the humour of *Ready to Rumble*, *KK 2001* is a chore. Big fans of the sport will get off on the features and fighters, but if you're after some heart-pumping action, look elsewhere, as response time is slow and the animation laboured.

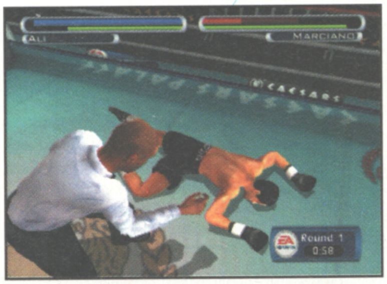
There may well be stacks of moves available, but when you can pull off devastating automated combos by holding R1 and tapping another button, there's little incentive to learn them yourself. In a nutshell, it's just not fun, and even the mighty Bruno can't change that.

computer and video
Games
★★

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY THESE...
Ready 2 Rumble 2 (PS2, DC),
UFC (DC)



The likenesses are pretty sound. Here's Ali in his prime



Well, that's settled then. Ali was better than Marciano

VIDEOGAMES AND FREE CHOCOLATE!

The laid-back snack

CHECK OUT WHAT HAPPENED WHEN OUR CVG/DRIFTER COMPETITION WINNERS CAME DOWN TO CVG TOWERS!

Two lucky CVG readers had the gaming day of their dreams, all thanks to our buddies at Drifter! Adeel Akram and Lee Drawbridge were the spawny winners of our competition to win a day out at CVG Towers. The guys spent a whole day playing the hottest new games like Metal Gear Solid 2, were taken for a wicked dinner at the world famous Planet Hollywood restaurant, and treated to a massive box of delicious Drifter bars plus a games-filled goody bag each. Dontcha wish you'd won instead?!

CHRISTMAS CAME EARLY

Adeel and Lee are both into their PlayStations and they jumped at the chance to be some of the first people in the country to play the MGS2 demo on PlayStation2. They were also treated to playing a special preview version of the incredible Gran Turismo 3 - these games won't be available in the shops until the end of the year! It was like Christmas had come early.

THE INSIDE SCOOP ON CVG!

After we tore the guys away from our special games room, we took 'em on a tour of the CVG offices, explaining how the magazine is put together from writing reviews, to designing pages. We explained exactly who does what on the mag and the whole process of producing the UK's best-selling multi-format games mag. As they laid back and enjoyed their free yummy Drifter bars, both Lee and Adeel said they didn't realise just how much work went into creating a magazine like CVG!

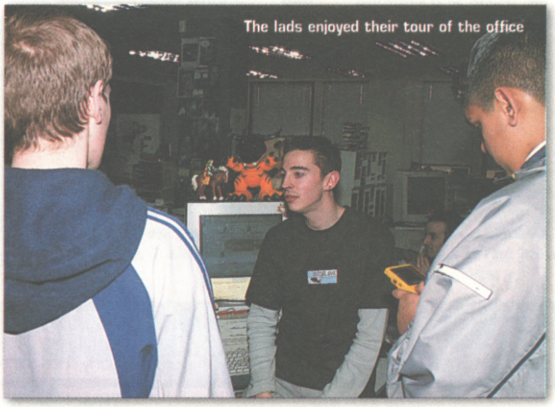
WE ATE TIL WE BURST!

All that delicious free chocolate wasn't enough for our winners though, so next stop: Planet Hollywood at Leicester Square! The décor was wicked and the food was top-drawer - a great way to finish an amazing day. And when we presented our guys with goodie bags stacked full of games, videogame goodies and even more Drifter bars, our winners looked like they'd stumbled upon a secret stash of treasure! Not bad for answering a simple question about Drifter bars, eh? If this all sounds good to you then you'd best keep your eyes peeled for future CVG/Drifter competitions!

Top two player action in our games room

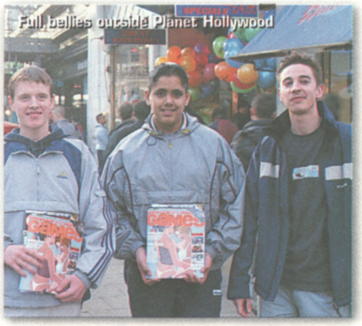
Check the concentration!

Adeel reads the latest mag



The lads enjoyed their tour of the office

Good grub amongst the movie props

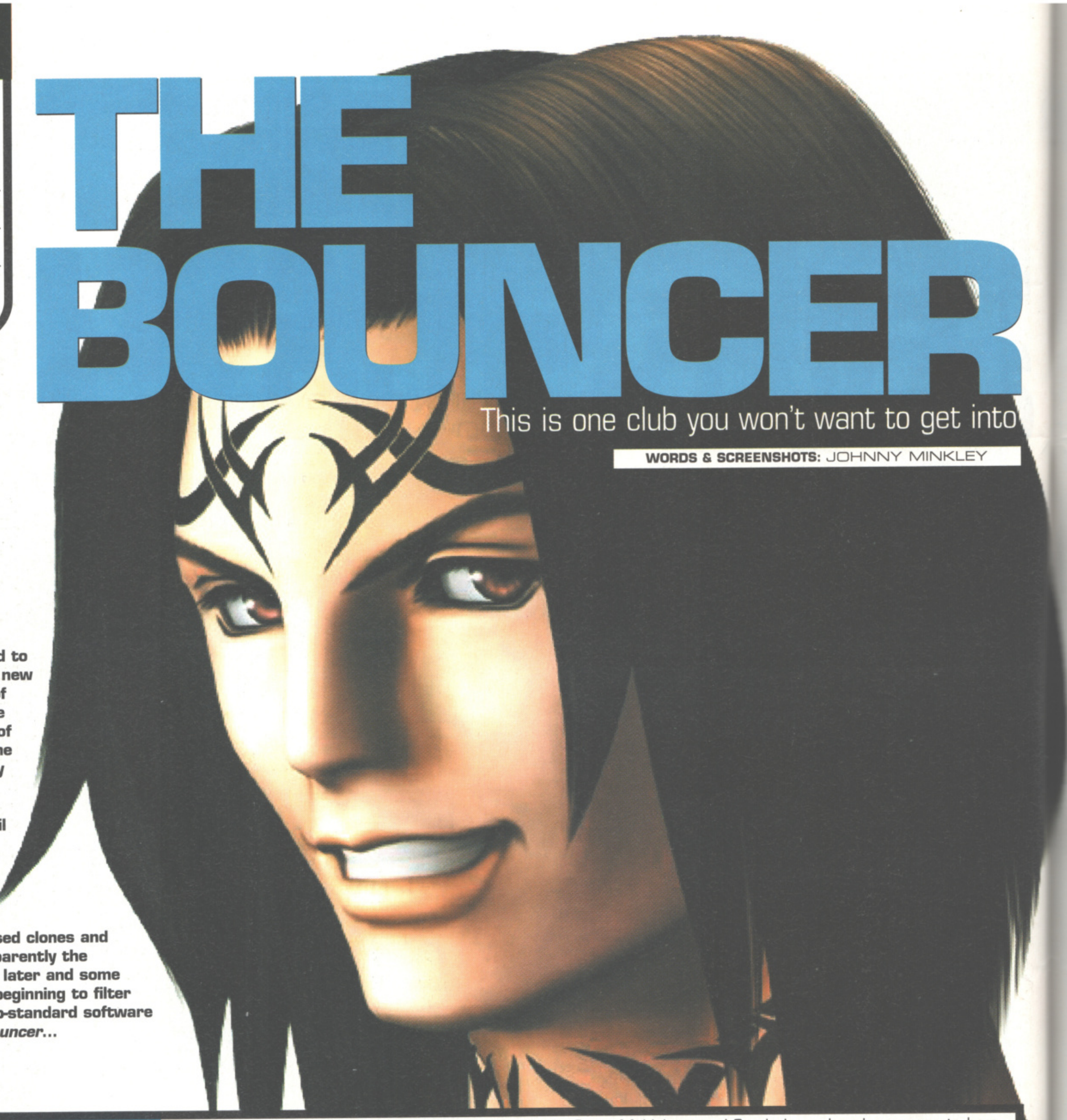


Full bellies outside Planet Hollywood

PS2

COST: **£39.99**
OUT: **MAR**
MULTIPLAYER: **1-4**

THE BOUNCER



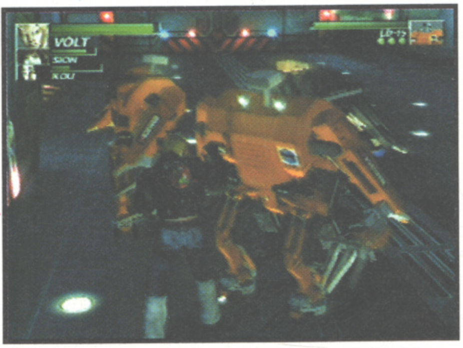
This is one club you won't want to get into

WORDS & SCREENSHOTS: JOHNNY MINKLEY

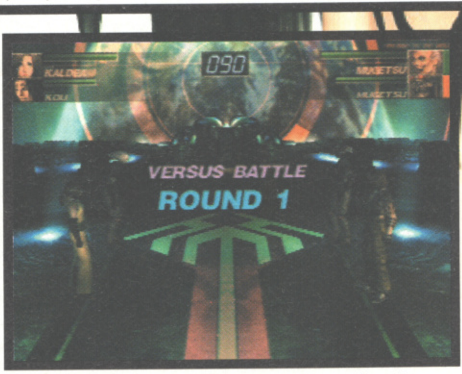
The PS2 was supposed to herald the dawn of a new gaming era; a piece of hardware to fulfill the videogame fantasies of developers and players alike the world over. We would see, play and feel games beyond our wildest imaginations, and sit back as an astonishing cocktail of sound, vision and emotion assaulted our senses. Then it was released, and a huge collective sigh from millions of gamers could be heard throughout the world. Half-arsed clones and questionable sequels were apparently the future of gaming. OK, months later and some fantastic, original games are beginning to filter through, but the plague of sub-standard software is far from over. Enter *The Bouncer*...

THIRD TIME UNLUCKY

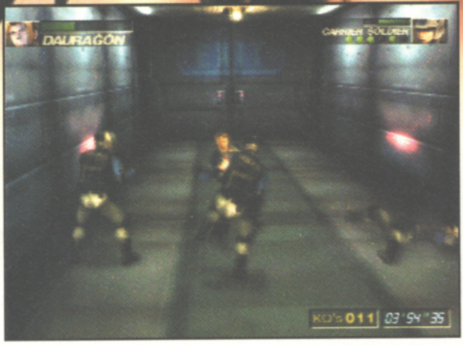
There are three main game modes in *The Bouncer* – Story, Multiplayer and Survival – and each manages to be a painfully bad experience. The core of the game is a roving beat 'em up but repetitive and sluggish fighting and a poorly thought out in-game camera successfully manage to drain the fun right out of the action.



The main Story mode. Guide three characters through stunning cut-scenes interspersed with the odd bit of woefully limited fighting



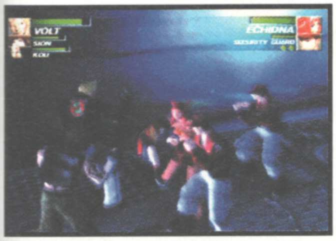
Multiplayer Battle mode. Go head-to-head with up to four players taking the pain simultaneously. *Tekken* it ain't



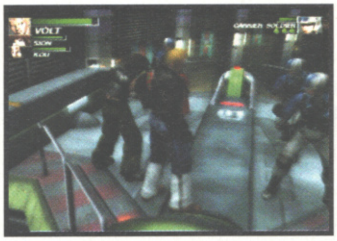
Pick a character and see how far you can get on one life. Survival mode could've been fun if they'd sorted the camera out. Ho hum

TIME CRIME

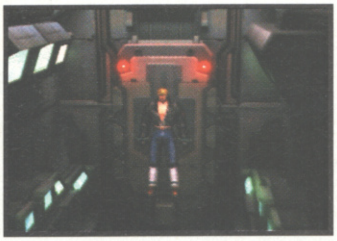
Skip all the boring cut-scene bits, and you can actually finish the game in an hour. Using only three moves. Oh dear. In an effort to show quite how painfully short this game is, we decided to finish it while taking a screenshot every ten minutes.



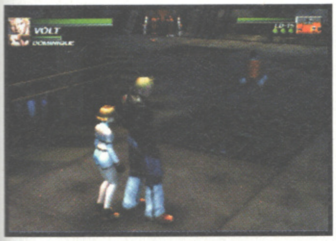
10 mins: We've made it to the first boss, Echidna. Like all the bosses bar the final one, this gal's a pushover. She looks a honey, though



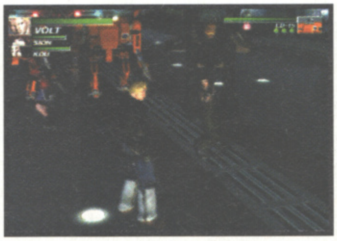
20 mins: More random fighting, but this time on a floaty thing. OK, it all looks fine but it's just a stream of generic hard-asses to whup



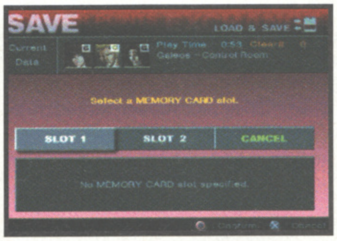
30 mins: The three bouncers split up, each having to escape their own way. You choose which one to follow in the game's most interesting section



40 mins: The largest section of the game takes place around the bad guys' hideout in a place called Mikado. It's the most repetitive section too



50 mins: Near the end and it's still easy-peasy lemon-squeezy. You're on an airship and all you do is headbutt a few robots and mash the final boss



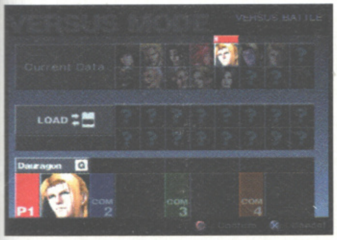
Select a MEMORY CARD slot.

No MEMORY CARD slot specified.

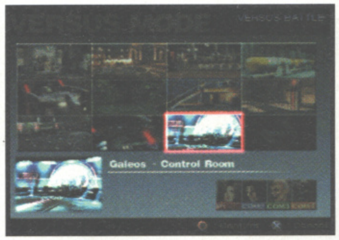
53 mins: And that's your lot. Not even one hour of shame. You're left with a load of new features unlocked and a sour taste in your mouth

EXTEND THE PAIN

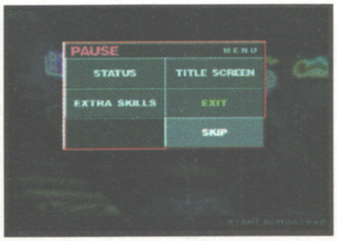
In an attempt to shoe in at least a little longevity to the game, additional features have been added, such as unlockable characters and battle areas, which are available for use in the Multiplayer mode.



All the boss characters are playable. This is great in theory, but sadly they are just as sluggish to control as the rest



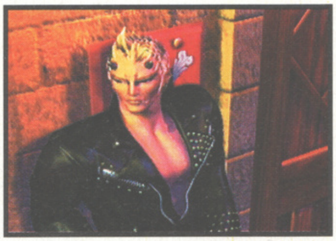
There are also various scenes from the game to fight your mates in. But you'll blunder around them blindly as the camera points the wrong way



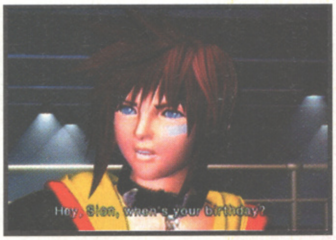
But best of all, the Skip function lets you play the game missing out all the cut-scenes, thus ending the pain that bit sooner

MEET THE BOUNCERS

The trio of jumped-up doormen that star in this game are not the type you'd likely find down your local Ritzy or Fifth Avenue nightclub. They've got names out of Star Trek and fashion sense to match. How realistic.

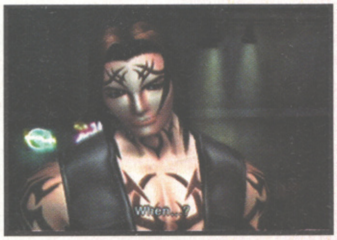


Volt Kreuger – rough on the outside, warm and fluffy on the inside. Cue weak 'horny' jokes



Hey, Sion, when's your birthday?

Sion Barzahd. His girlfriend is kidnapped at the start of the game. This is him, not her



When...?

Kou Leifoh. The tattoos may be rock 'ard mate, but you've still got a girl's haircut

WHAT WE THOUGHT...

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A night down the local Ritzy dressed as a Klingon

GAME OF SHAME

If you haven't worked it out already, then let us spell it out for you. *The Bouncer* is a torrid, shambling mockery of a game that should never have seen the light of day. It's just inexcusable nowadays to release a game that you can finish in less than an hour, and no amount of flashy cut-scenes, motion-blur and extras can excuse that fact. Granted, the CGI in the game is completely stunning and some of the best seen on a home console, but gameplay is what we pay our money for. Once the initial awe wears off, you'll soon become weary of the naff story and dull, lifeless characters.

GAME OF TWO LAUGHS

Trying to be both an action-packed movie and a hardcore fighting game simultaneously, *The Bouncer* achieves neither and the two halves sit together rather awkwardly. Where *Shadow of Memories* provides a fascinating story that works in perfect harmony with the gameplay, *The Bouncer* presents a dull tale punctuated by repetitive fighting sections that only detract from the effect of the plot. *SoM* is gripping enough to ensure you'll play through it multiple times to see all the endings, but without a strong storyline, *The Bouncer* struggles to keep you glued for the paltry hour it takes to finish it the first place.

WHY, OH WHY?

There may well be an impressive range of moves available to each bouncer, plus plenty more to earn, but when it's possible to finish the game using only two or three, what's the point? You'll find yourself simply hammering the buttons right up to the end. The Multiplayer mode offers a brief glimmer of fun, until you realise that four bored players are no better than one. And the same goes for Survival mode, which is a nice idea crippled by the inexplicably bad in-game camera that frequently makes it impossible to see your foes or where you're going. This is agonisingly frustrating and frankly shocking in a finished title, but somewhat perversely is one of the few things that adds any challenge to the game. D'oh! We had such high hopes for this one – after all, it's from the same bunch of designers as *Final Fantasy* – but all we can say is stick to what you know best. The PS2 was not built for software which promises the world, yet gives you next to nothing. Avoid like the plague it is.

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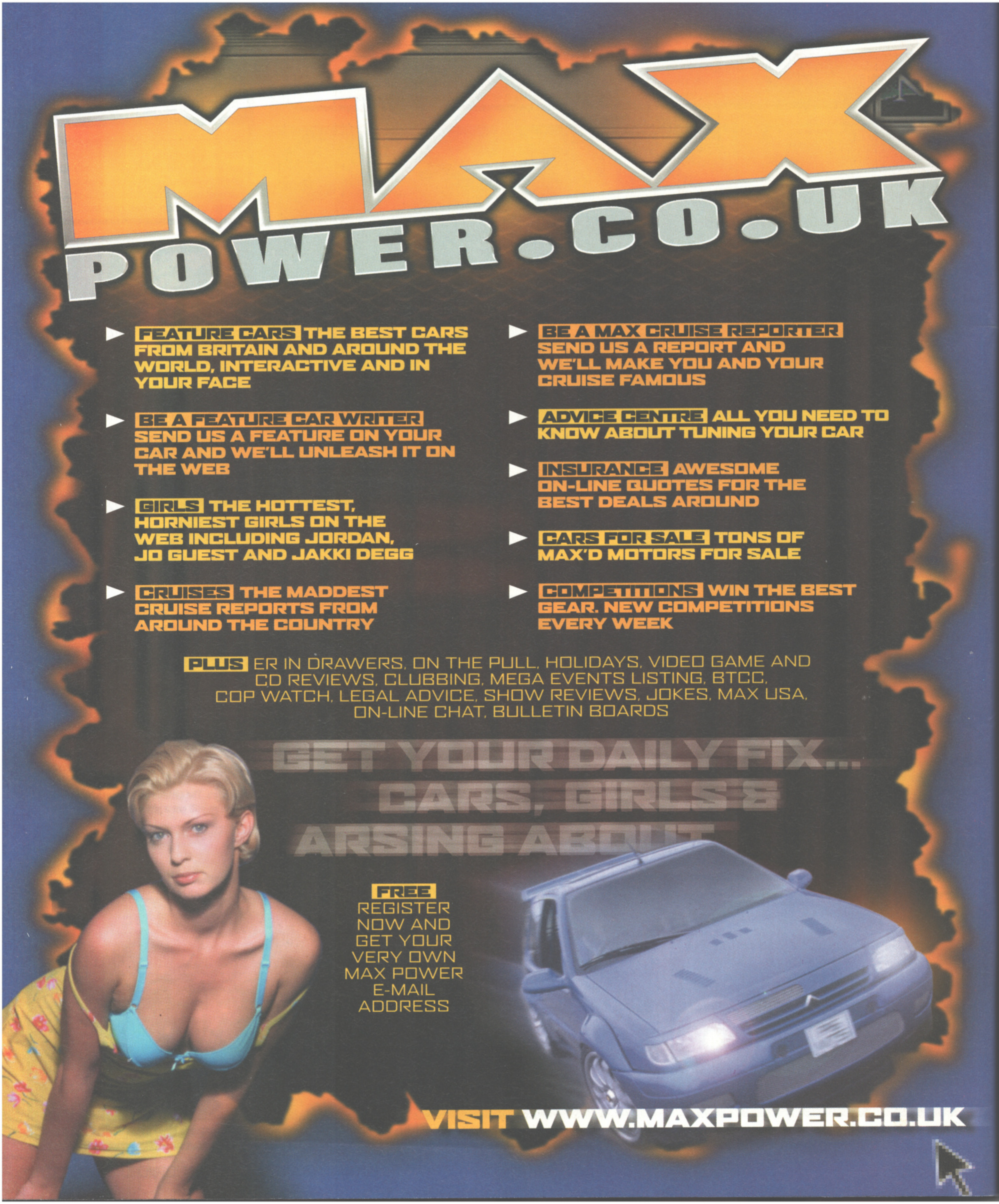

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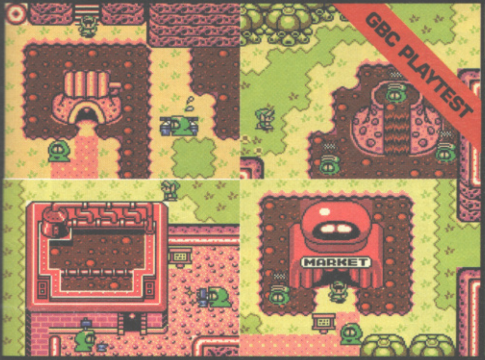
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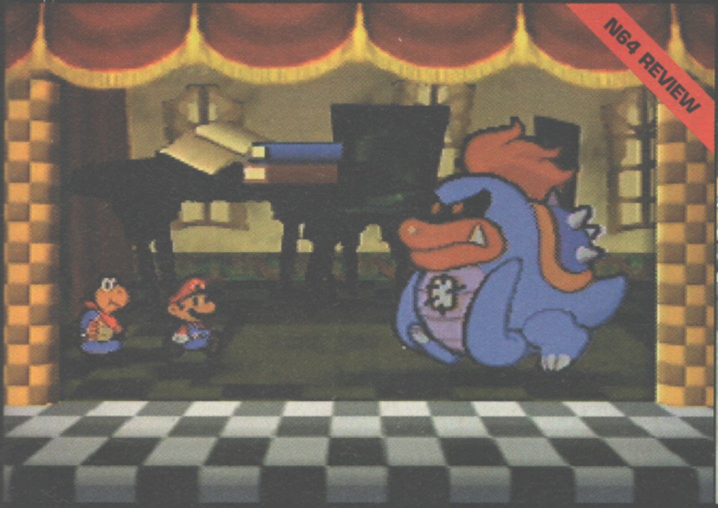

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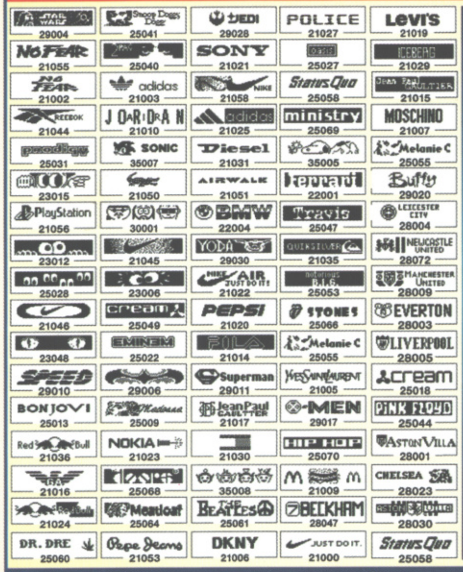

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